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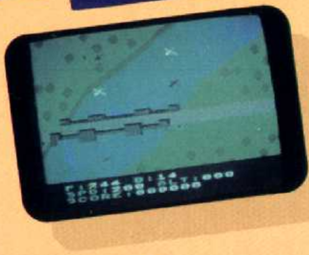
SERIOUS SOFTWARE

HYPNOTIZE YOURSELF!
LEARN TO TYPE!

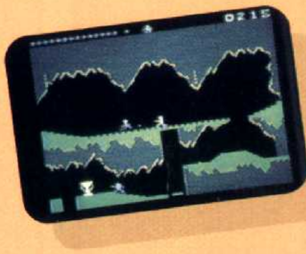
APPLE, COMMODORE, ATARI OWNERS!
BEFORE YOU BUY ANY GAME... See page 53

SYNAPSE EXCITEMENT



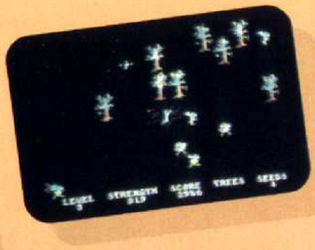
On patrol
Out of the sun comes your RAF biplane, loaded down with a deadly cargo of bombs and bullets. But watch out for the anti-aircraft guns and the enemy fighters—a hit could mean a tricky landing for repairs and ammo.
BLUE MAX.*

BLUE MAX
SYNAPSE SOFTWARE



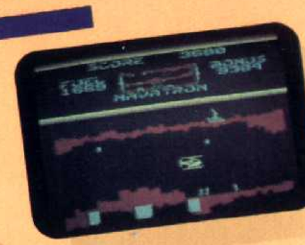
Ancient treasure
A fortune is yours for the taking. But can you avoid the ghost of Rama and the evil mummy? Are you nimble enough to leap the chasms and outsmart the booby traps between you and freedom? **The PHARAOH'S CURSE.***

THE PHARAOH'S CURSE
SYNAPSE SOFTWARE



Spellbinding
Only you can restore the forest through ancient spells. Then you must march your army of enchanted trees into battle against the Troglodytes and the evil Necromancer. Who will emerge triumphant from the final conflict? **NECROMANCER.***

Necromancer
SYNAPSE SOFTWARE



Take the controls
Your helicopter mission—capture vital fuel and weapons, free the enslaved masses, and finally destroy the fortress itself. Will you triumph or be crushed by the fiendish Kraalthan lords?
FORT APOCALYPSE.*

FORT APOCALYPSE
SYNAPSE SOFTWARE

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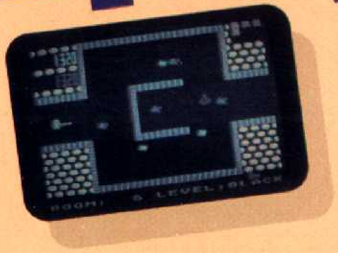
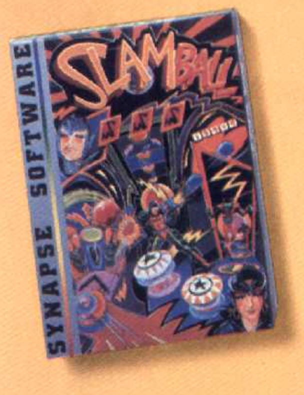
FOR YOUR C-64!

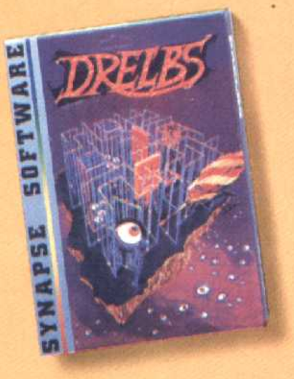


Awesome action
Maybe you've played pinball before, but not like this! No time to think, no room to make even one mistake. Just quick reflexes, light body armor and a whole lot of luck between you and the end of the game. **SLAM BALL.***

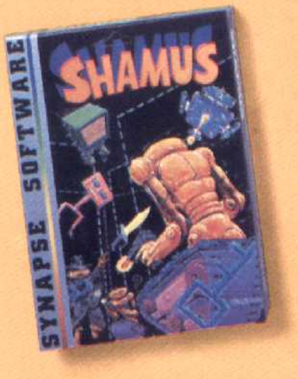


Very hot air
First the prison break, but that's only the beginning! The underground world of Zarkafir is full of surprises, from the lethal energy fields to devastating earthquakes. Can you defeat the Timelords? **ZEPPELIN.***

Flip-flop
Into this miniature land comes the evil Trollaboars, determined to take over. Their screwhead tanks will surely crush the peaceful Drelbs, unless you can defeat them on the atomic flip grid. **DRELBS.***



The Shadow knows
Deep in his lair the Shadow waits, protected by deadly Robo-Droids, Whirling Drones and Snap-Jumpers. Only the very strong and the very quick are ever seen again! **SHAMUS* & SHAMUS CASE II.***



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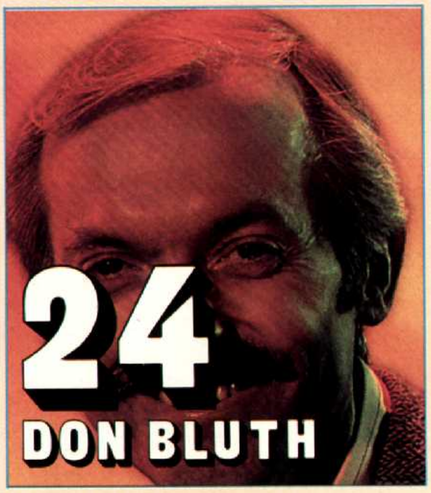

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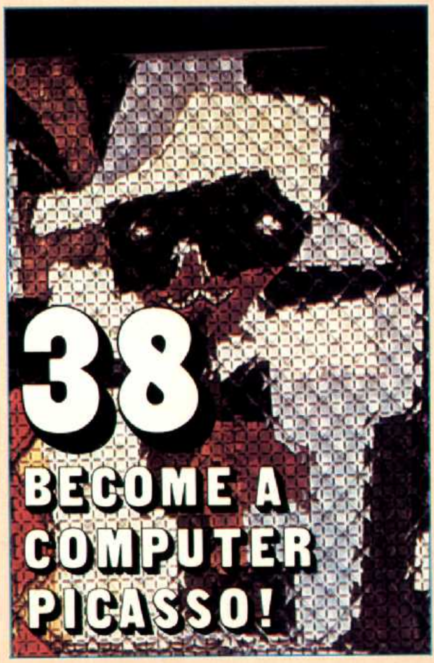

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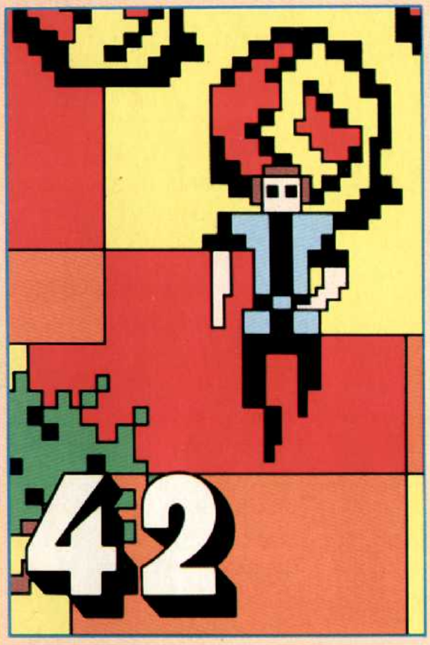

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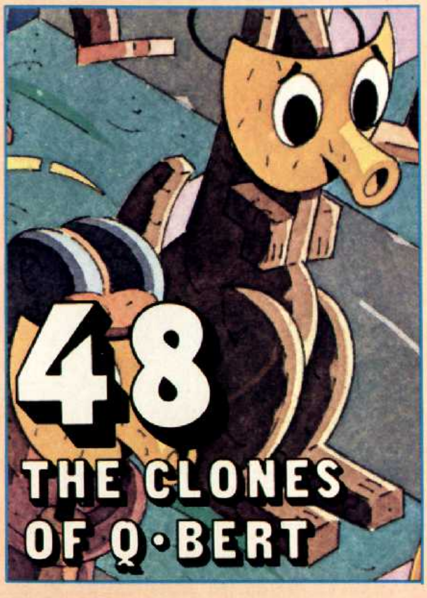

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NEW GAMES FOR THE 5200 & COLECOVISION

Compiled by Marcia Dimetrosky

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COLECO VS. 5200

In your August/September issue, there was an article purporting to compare ColecoVision with the 5200. But no fault was found with either system that was not later offset by some advantage. This was nothing but a sendup of both systems. Your problem seems to be that you don't critically examine any of the hardware or software for fear of offending your advertisers.

Kenneth Rodman

Wait a second! Coleco doesn't even advertise in this magazine, and probably never will. The advantages and drawbacks of both systems are vital information, because the final determination as to which is better is a subjective one made by the person who'll be playing all his games on it. And if you really want to read a critical article on hardware, check out The Truth about Adam *in our February issue. (And we really didn't go easy on the 5200, either.)*

FREE VCS GAMES?

I heard a rumor that Atari has been throwing away a lot of their games that didn't sell well. Is this true? If so, is there any way I can get some free maybe?

Jimmy Logan

According to Rumor Control Central here in New York, Atari is not satisfied with throwing their poor-selling games in the trash—they're dumping them in a city landfill in Alamogordo, New Mexico. Guards held back reporters and anyone who might have tried to grab a cart or two while 14 *truckloads of equipment were buried and covered with concrete. So unless you've got a jackhammer handy, don't count on scarfing up any free Atari carts. Too bad Atari's not just giving them away. There are thousands of kids in Sheboygan who are starving for video games.*

EMPTY
ATARI
CONTENTS

Find the hidden cases of Atari cartridges hidden somewhere under New Mexico. Some people say the cartridges were dumped because they didn't sell. Atari says they were defective.

DO IT YOURSELF

The article in your February issue about games that let you create your own version was interesting, but I hate pinball games, and already own *Lode Runner.* Are there any other games with this option?

Ronnie Owens

Sure. Suspended, *an all-text science fiction adventure from Infocom;* Combat Leader *from SSI and* Oil Barons *from Epyx (both reviewed in this issue); and Broderbund's* Loose Change. *If you go for strategy-type games, most of SSI's allow you to create your own scenario. Write for their catalog: SSI, 883 Stierlin Rd., Bldg. A-200, Mountain View, CA 94043-1983.*

VIC ADVENTURES

I own a VIC-20, and it's great. But I don't like all-text games and can't find any other adventures. What should I do?

John Smith

Look behind the rock. (Only kidding, John.) Epyx makes The Sword of Fargoal *for VIC with 16K. It's on cassette. They're also releasing a 16K cassette classic* Temple of Apshai.

AD-NAUSEUM

Why is it that Activision can run an ad in your February issue for a game called *Frostbite*, but you don't even review it?

A. J. Sheinman

Hey, it's not our fault! Many companies in this business prepare ads for new games, even computers, long before they're actually ready to be released. Often they will run the ad in various magazines before they have review copies to send out, which is as frustrating for us as it is for you.

WORDS 'R' US

Are there any computer games that teach kids how to do word processing?

Mac Williams

Not yet, but there are a few that will teach you how to type —which a lot of writers with word processors obviously haven't yet learned to do. There's Mastertype *by Lightning Software,* Type Attack *by Sirius and Microsoft's* Typing Tutor. *It's not a game, but* Bank Street Writer *is an excellent introductory word processor marketed by Broderbund for a number of computers.*

FLASH-BACK

In your August/September issue, you reviewed a game called *Flash Gordon* for Atari VCS. I saw an ad for a game that looked a lot like it, *Spider City* for Atari and VIC computers. The only difference was your name in this one is Captain Star instead of Flash Gordon. What's going on here?

Brian Hadley

What's going on is that Fox Video's Flash Gordon *was one of those rare games for the VCS that a software house (* Sirius *) deemed good enough to warrant conversion for the Atari and VIC-20 computers. As* Spider City, *it has superior graphics.*

Got a question? Got a gripe? Just want half a million people to see your name in print? Punch your initials in here, partner, and write: Letters to the Editor, Computer Games, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106.

PITSTOP.™
WHERE WINNING IS THE PITS.
GIUFFRE BROS.
98

You'll never make Grand Prix champion just driving in circles.

You've got to stop sometime. The question is when. Right now you're in the lead. But the faster you go, the more gas you consume. And the quicker your tires wear down.

If you do pull into the pits, though, you lose precious seconds. So it's up to you to make sure the pit crew is quick with those tires. And careful with that gas. Otherwise, poof! you're out of the race.

So what'll it be, Mario? Think your tires will hold up for another lap? Or should you play it safe and go get some new ones?

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FIRST NEWS WAVE

HOT GOSSIP

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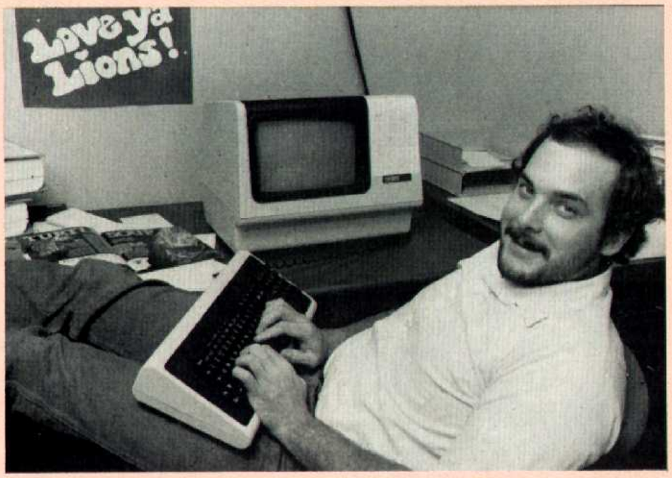
GAMES
TAC/SCAN
SUBTERFUGE
BUCK ROGERS
48 HRS

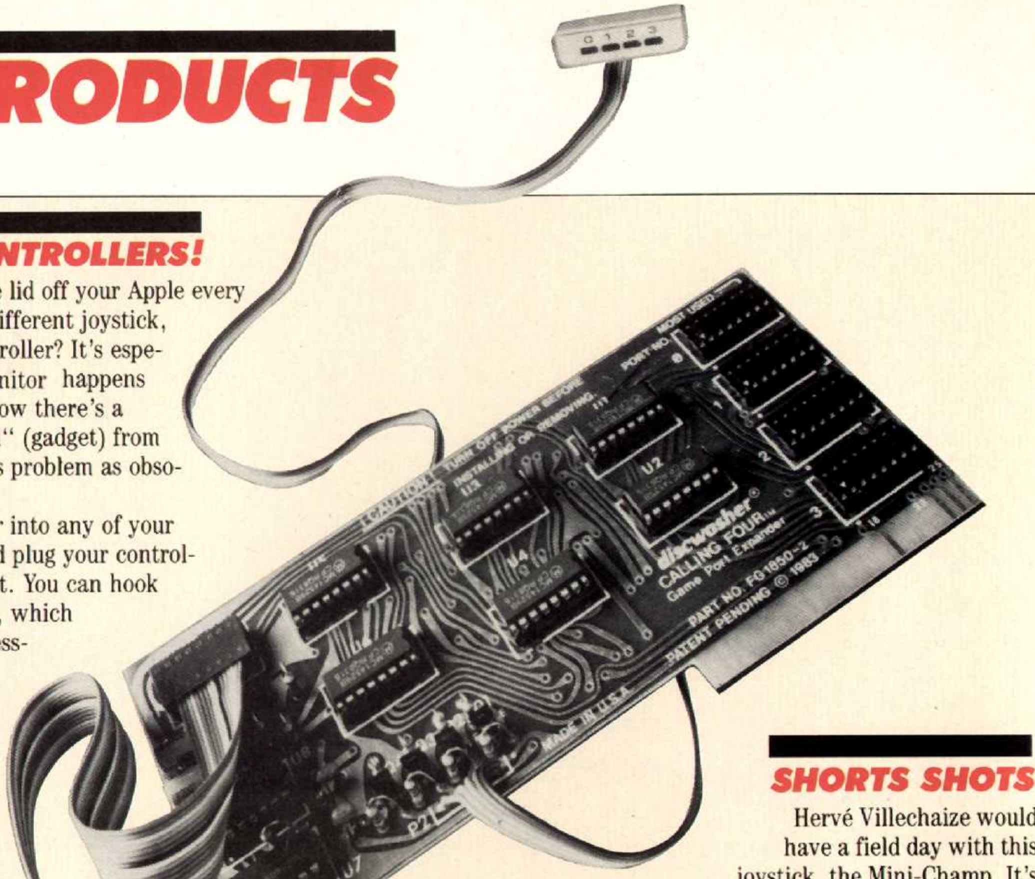

Love ya Lions!

Whatever happened to these announced Sega games? (top). Bob Harris has hidden a juicy Easter egg in War Room, by Probe 2000. Neal Patrick tells his side of the computer break-in story.

Rumor of the month: **Atari** will release a new **game system**, the **3600**, which will be **VCS compatible** and have graphics that will make the 5200 **obsolete**... **Werdna**, a character in **Wizardry**, is the backwards name of the game's designer, **Andrew Greenburg**. Fans of **Wizardry** can get ready for a third scenario, which is about to be released... **Purina** has released a new game called **Chase The Chuckwagon**. We believe it's the first game based on dogfood... The hottest game in **Japan** is **TX-1**, a driving game in which you have to watch **three monitors** at the same time... **Miner 2049er** was rejected by two arcade game manufacturers before it became a computer game. Now it's available in every format imaginable and **three sequel games** are planned, the first of which will be **Scraper Caper** ... The word **"byte"** was coined by **IBM** engineer **W. Bucholz** in the mid-1950s, when he was working on the IBM Stretch computer... If you were wondering why **Nolan Bushnell's** return did not come on October 2nd as promised, it was because of legal problems ... **Probe 2000** designer **"Rosha" Harris** created **Nimble Numbers N.E.D.** and **Killer Bees** before his hit for **ColecoVision**, **War Room**. War Room, by the way, was originally an **economic** game called **Black Marketeer** before Harris put the **nuclear missiles** in. He has also hidden his **resume** within the program!... Have you noticed that you fly over **Florida** in the middle of **Xevious**?... **Activision** is moving in the direction of **multiple formats** for their games. Systems targeted—**Commodore 64**, **ColecoVision**, **Atari 5200**, and **Atari computers**. Our buddy **Walter** "Mr. Video Games" **Day** tells us he slept on the floor of his arcade for **eight months** while he was establishing the **Twin Galaxies International Scoreboard**... Computer break-ins are starting to make the national news. **Neal Patrick** of **Milwaukee** recently testified before a House subcommittee on Science and Technology about how he obtained entrance to the **Los Alamos National Laboratory** computers last summer... 66-year-old **Don Herbert** is back on TV. You might remember him as **"Mr. Wizard"** back in the 1950s. Herbert's 1984 show will discuss computers, robotics and other high-tech subjects... **Parker Brothers** has shelved plans to release a VCS version of **Astro Chase**, even though the game is completed. Does this mean they're abandoning the VCS? Is everyone abandoning the VCS? Have you noticed that **Astro Chase** and **Kaboom** (computer version) both use the **1812 Overture**? Is **Tschaikovsky** collecting royalties?... **Atari** delayed the release of their two new higher priced computers, the **1400XL** and the **1450XLD**... **Zircon** and **TG Products** have both shelved plans for Atari **trackballs**, but TG has released theirs for the **Apple** and **IBM PC**... If you can reach the 30th wave in **Williams'** new **Blaster** arcade game, you'll receive a **one-million** point bonus and witness a "heavenly spectacle" ... **Atari** kills three arcade games for every one they release. Their **Gravitar**, which bombed all over the U.S., was the number one game in the **San Francisco** area... Did you know that arcade games in **Japan** are easier than the ones here?... **Starpath** has been purchased by **Epyx**... Of the 13 games promised by **Sega** over a year ago, **two** have been released so far... In **Dragon's Lair II**, Dirk the Daring and Daphne have **13 kids**! Now **there's** an adventure... **Odyssey** is no longer publishing their **Odyssey Adventure** magazine, and **Joystick** has also folded. In other dismal news, both **Apple** and **Coleco** had a disappointing 1983... And **Commodore**, still selling their **64** like hotcakes, are getting **20-30%** of their merchandise returned to them because it is **defective**. These manufacturers sure make it difficult to love computers sometimes.

Catch ya next time!

NEW PRODUCTS



CALLING ALL CONTROLLERS!

Don't you hate prying the lid off your Apple every time you want to wield a different joystick, paddle or other exotic controller? It's especially annoying if your monitor happens to sit atop the computer. Now there's a new "expansion peripheral" (gadget) from Discwasher that makes this problem as obsolete as *Pong*.

Just pop the *Calling Four* into any of your Apple's expansion slots and plug your controllers into an external widget. You can hook up four controllers at once, which simplifies using word processing and financial software that can run a mouse and trackball simultaneously. (But gamers can't use two sticks at once in a two-player game.) This is a real time-saver, and goes for $69.95.

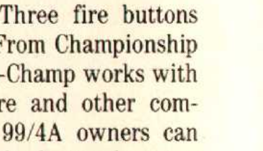
ATARI'S NEW COMPUTERS!

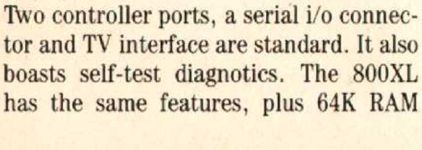
Four new home computers from Atari make up the XL line, replacing the 400, 800 and 1200XL. The 600XL has 16K (expandable to 64), built-in BASIC, a HELP key, game slot, two controller ports and features software compatibility with the previous Atari line. Graphics resolution is 320 x 192 in hi-res; text display is 24 lines, 40 characters wide. Two controller ports, a serial i/o connector and TV interface are standard. It also boasts self-test diagnotics. The 800XL has the same features, plus 64K RAM and TV/monitor output.

The 1400XLD has all of the above, four programmable function keys, a 300-baud built-in modem and a speech synthesizer. And if you go for the top of the line, the 1450XL, you'll also get a built-in double-sided dual density disk drive. Prices range from $199 up. Now get out there and play your Atari today!

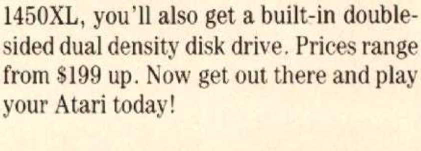
SHORTS SHOTS

Hervé Villechaize would have a field day with this joystick, the Mini-Champ. It's especially designed for gamers with small hands, so you'll be able to concentrate on blasting aliens instead of holding onto the controller. It's also got a 4 ½-foot cord that retracts into the base—so your kid sister won't accidentally get strangled when she strolls past the set in the middle of a hot game of *Gorf*. Three fire buttons come in handy too. From Championship Electronics, the Mini-Champ works with all Atari, Commodore and other compatible systems. TI 99/4A owners can use it with the PC-310 adapter that goes for $4.95. The Mini-Champ itself sells for $12.95.

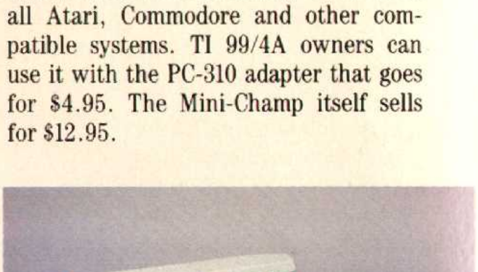




800XL



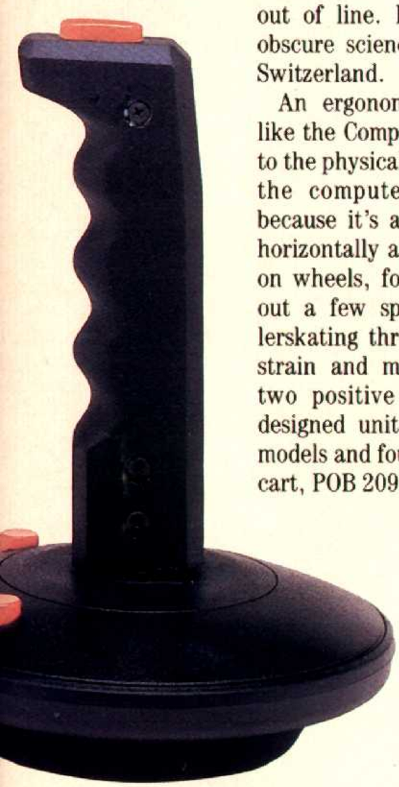
1450XLD



JASON AND THE ERGONAUTS

Gameplaying, word processing and breaking into Pentagon computer networks can really wear you out if your computer's set up at the wrong angle and your keyboard's just a hair out of line. Enter ergonomics, that once obscure science developed by tiny ergs in Switzerland.

An ergonomically designed workstation like the Compucart here is built to conform to the physical requirements of the user, not the computer. The Compucart's great because it's adjustable both vertically and horizontally at the keyboard level. It's also on wheels, for people who want to knock out a few spreadsheet models while rollerskating through the park. Reduced eyestrain and more comfortable posture are two positive results from such a well-designed unit, which is available in four models and four finishes. $595 from Compucart, POB 2095, Tampa, FL 33609-2095.



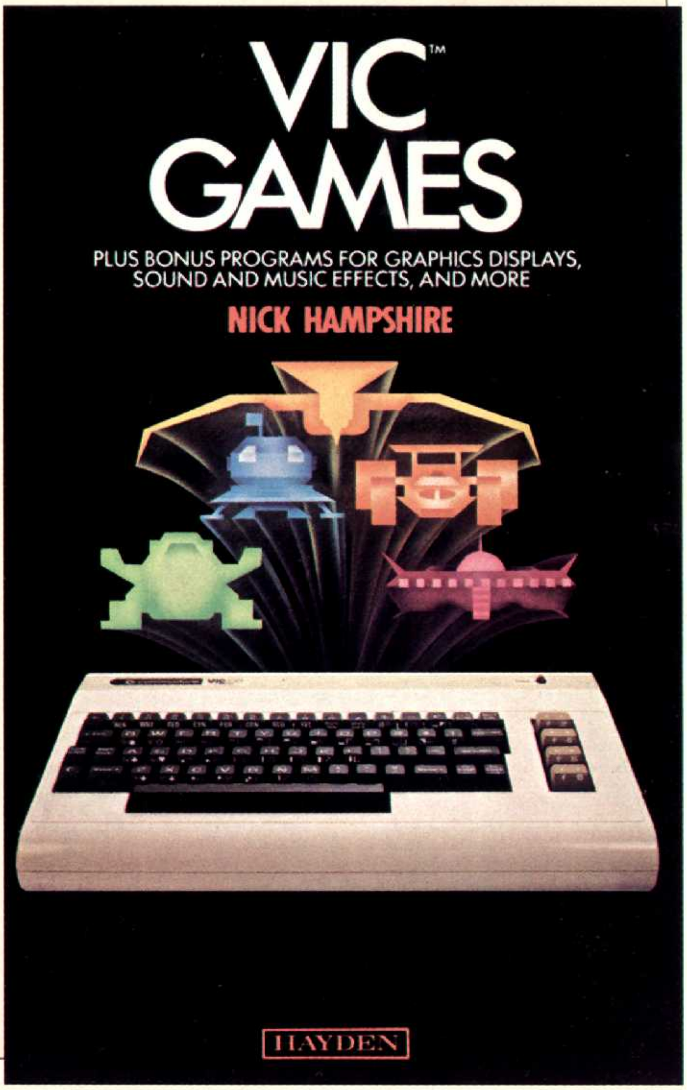
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO FLY...

How'd you like to *really* climb behind the controls of a space ship the next time you pop a cart into the port? Now you can, with the Cosmic Commander (shown at left) from Milton Bradley. It comes with a new game *Survival Run*, in which the Commander delivers a gut-wrenching tactile sensation as you grip the controls, vibrating and rattling every time you squeeze off a shot.

And you can attach this souped-up joystick to any game console or computer that uses Atari-compatible controllers.

FREE VIC-20 GAMES

All games don't come on cartridges or disks, and *VIC Games* is an excellent source for anyone who wants to type in any of its 36 easy-to-read program listings. *Breakout*, *Space Pirates* and *Find the Word* are among the games included, most of which are for the unexpanded VIC. There are also programs that facilitate art and musical applications. For budding programmers, there's a "Tinymon" listing and several other utilities. By Nick Hampshire, it's available from Hayden Book Company for $12.95.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WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU?

FUTURE RELEASES FROM THE TOP GAME COMPANIES

ACTIVISION

Pressure Cooker (VCS). River Raid, Kaboom (5200).

ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL

Nightwalker, Labyrinth of Crete, Laser Ball, Arex, Rear Guard, War, Diskey, Gnome Valley, Maxi Accountant, C'est la Vie (64).

ATARI

Moon Patrol, Road Runner, Goofy, Xevious, Sinistar (5200). Krull, Cookie Monster, Big Bird, Dumbo Flying Circus, Miss Piggy's Wedding, Pigs in Space, Charlie Brown, Sorcerer's Apprentice, Snow White, Mario Bros. (VCS).

ATARISOFT

Donky Kong, Centipede, Pac-Man, Defender, Stargate, Dig Dug, Robotron: 2084 (64, VIC, IBM, AP, TI). Protector II, Shamus, Picnic Paranoia, Super Storm (TI).

BRODERBUND

Drol, Gumball (AP). Seafox (VIC).

CBS ELECTRONICS

Murder by the Dozen (64, AP). Match-Wits (AP, IBM). Omega Race, Mountain King (VCS).

COLECO

War Games (COL).

EPYX

FAX (AP, 64). Gateway to Apshai, Lunar Outpost (AT, 64, TI). Silicon Warriors, Dragonriders of Pern, Gunfight/Seawolf, Starfire/Fire One, SWAT Rescue (AT). Temple of Apshai (VIC). Jump Man Jr. (64). Jump Man (IBM). Pitstop (64, TI, COL., AT). Fun with Art (64).

FOX

M*A*S*H*, Porky's, Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes (VIC, AT).

GAMESTAR

Star League Baseball, Star Bowl Football (64).

MICRO LAB

Scraper Caper (COL). Dino Eggs (AP). Miner 2049er (IBM).

PARKER BROTHERS

Death Star Battle, Chess, Super Cobra (AT). Frogger (VIC). Chess (AT48, IBM).

PENGUIN

Thunderbombs, Pieman, Pensate (AT). Xyphus, Expedition Amazon (AP). Spy's Demise (VIC, AT). Bouncing Kamungas, Thunderbombs, Pensate, Spy Strikes Back (64).

ROKLAN

Da' Fuzz, Journey to the Planets, Rockball (AT, 64). Star Maze, Pyramid Puzzle, Picture Parts, Space Journey (AT, AP). Rack 'em Up (AT, 64, IBM). Lifespan (AT). Diamond Mine (AT, AP, 64). Castle Hassle (64).

SCREENPLAY

Danger Ranger, Institute (AT, 64).

SEGA

Star Trek, Buck Rogers Planet of Zoom, Congo Bongo.

SIERRA ON-LINE

BC's Quest for Tires (AT, COL).

SIRIUS

Plasmania (VIC). Bandits, Wayout, Ozzy Ozone, Shadowscorcher (64). Final Orbit/Burger Bash (VIC). Space Eggs, Gorgon II (IBM).

STARPATH

Dragonstomper, Rabbit Transit, Survival Island, Escape from the Mindmaster (5200, COL, VCS, Supercharger). Party Mix (AT). Sweat (COL, AT).

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS

Knights of the Desert (64). Queen of Hearts, Fortress (AP). Professional Tour Golf (64, AP).

SUBLOGIC

Flight Simulator II (AT48, AP).

SYNAPSE

Pussyfootin', Doughboy, Glub Glub (VIC). Quasimodo, Shadow World, Dimension X, Pharoah's Curse, New York City, Rainbow Walker, Necromancer (AT). Morgol, Blue Max, Pharoah's Curse, Sentinel (64).

TRONIX

Juice, Kid Grid, S.A.M., Waterline, Suicide Strike, Motocross, Slalom (64). Chatterbee (AT, 64). Teletari (AT). Sports Derby (AT, AP, 64).

XEROX

Stickybear Basketbounce, Stickybear Opposites, Stickybear Shapes, Fat City, Chivalry, Exploring Tables and Graphs—Grades 3-4 and 5-6 (AP).

VCS = Atari VCS, IN = Intellivision, 5200 = Atari 5200, AT = Atari Home computers, COL = ColecoVision, GEM- = Coleco Gemini, VIC = Commodore VIC-20, 64 = Commodore 64, AP = Apple II, TRS = Radio Shack TRS-80, TI = Texas Instruments TI 99/4A, VEC = Vectrex, IBM = IBM PC, ODY = Odyssey², SPEC = Spectravideo computer.

HIT GAMES & HIGH SCORES

COMPUTER GAMES

1. *LODE RUNNER (Broderbund)*
2. *ZORK I (Infocom)*
3. *ZAXXON (Datasoft)*
4. *CHOPLIFTER (Broderbund)*
5. *BLUE MAX (Synapse)*
6. *TEMPLE OF APSHAI (Epyx)*
7. *PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET (Electronic Arts)*
8. *WIZARDRY (Sir-Tech)*
9. *JUMPMAN (Epyx)*
10. *FROGGER (Sierra On-line)*

HOME VIDEO GAMES

1. *Q*BERT (Parker)*
2. *POLE POSITION (Atari)*
3. *MS. PAC-MAN (Atari)*
4. *FROGGER (Parker)*
5. *BURGER TIME (Intellivision)*
6. *ENDURO (Activision)*
7. *MR. DO (Coleco)*
8. *CENTIPEDE (Atari)*
9. *DECATHLON (Activision)*
10. *JUNGLE HUNT (Atari)*

ARCADE GAMES

1. *POLE POSITION (Atari)*
2. *M.A.C.H. III (Mylstar)*
3. *DRAGON'S LAIR (Cinematronics)*
4. *STAR WARS (Atari)*
5. *DISCS OF TRON (Bally)*
6. *CRYSTAL CASTLES (Atari)*
7. *GALAGA (Bally)*
8. *MS. PAC-MAN (Bally)*
9. *ELEVATOR ACTION (Taito)*
10. *MILLIPEDE (Atari)*

HIGH SCORES

POLE POSITION: 66,910 (E.T., 215), by Mike Klug

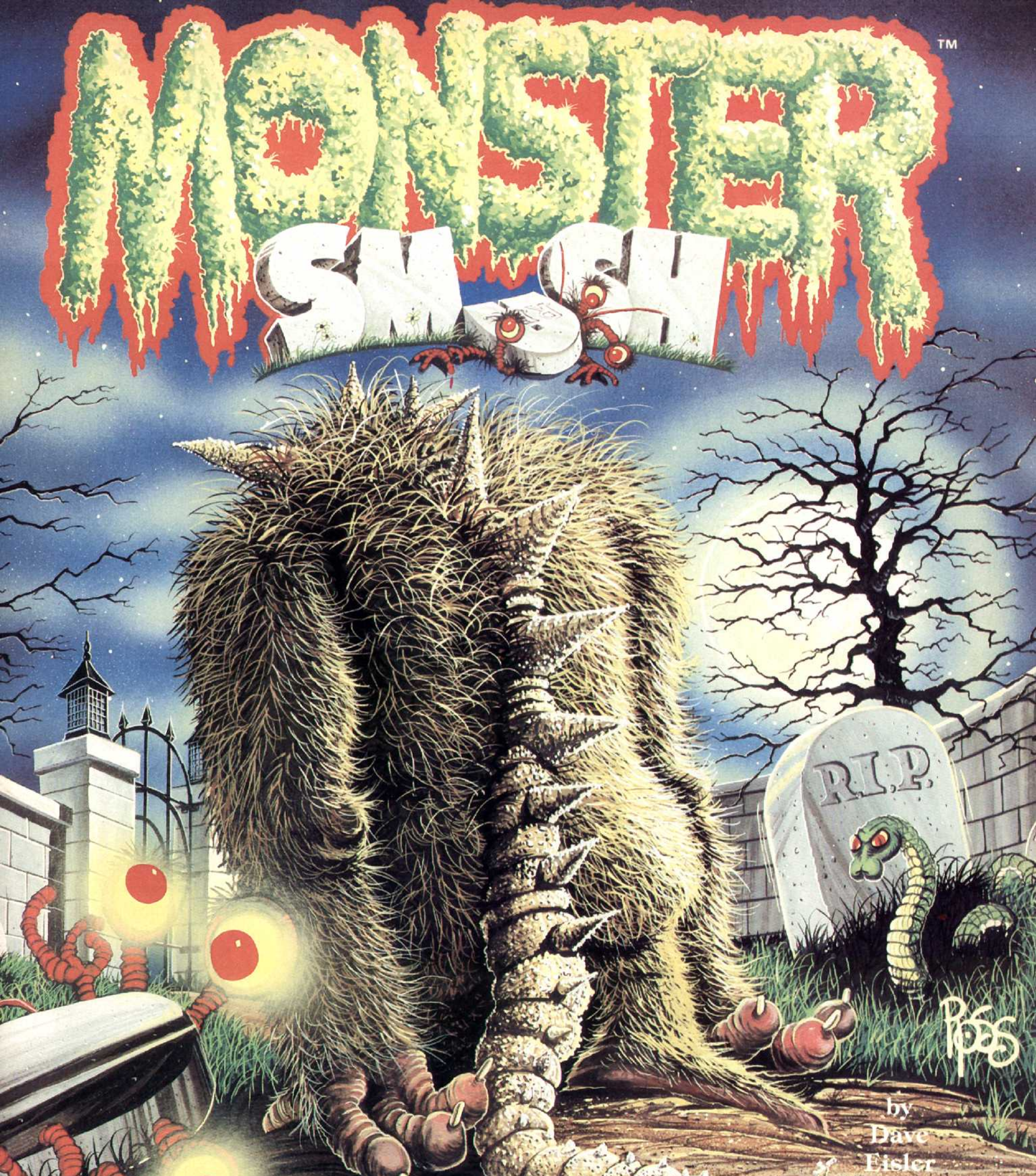
CRYSTAL CASTLES: 846,547, by Eric Ginner

MS. PAC-MAN: 681,190, by Tom Asaki

DRAGON'S LAIR (5 Dirks): 427,469, by Kevin Crane

STAR WARS (hard setting): 52,041,781, by Dave Palmer

Our thanks to RePlay for the arcade game list, to Walter Day and Twin Galaxies International Scoreboard for the high scores, and to Billboard for the home video games list, which is ©1984 by Billboard Publications, Inc., compiled by the Billboard Research Department and reprinted with permission.



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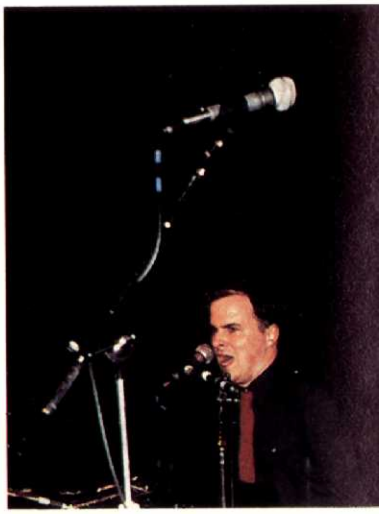
THE COMPUTER GAME GAZETTE

ACTIVISION DESIGNER BECOMING ROCK STAR

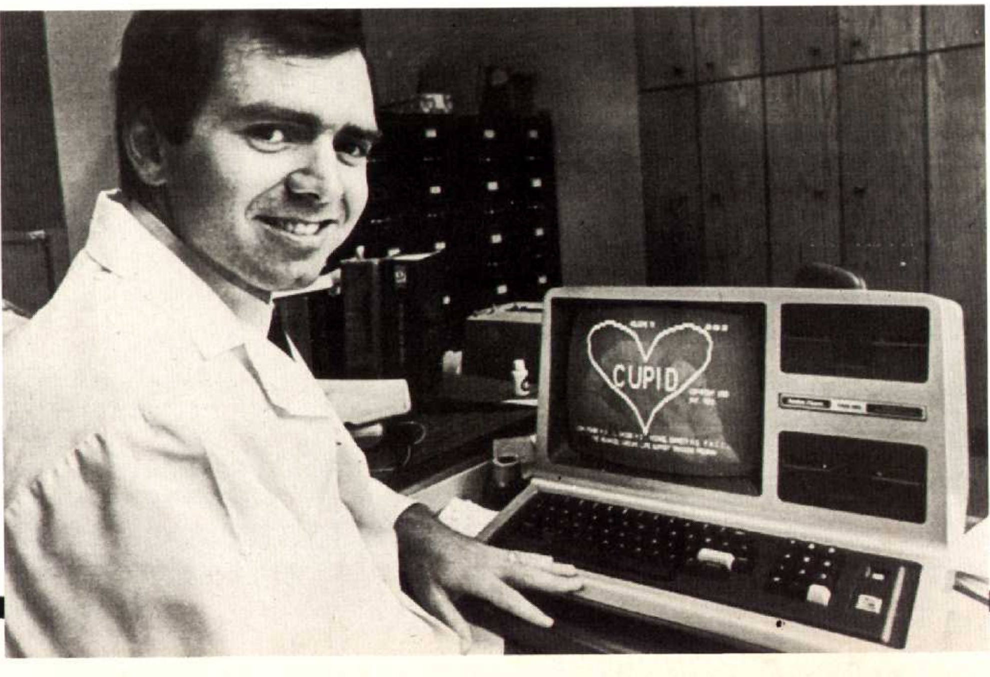


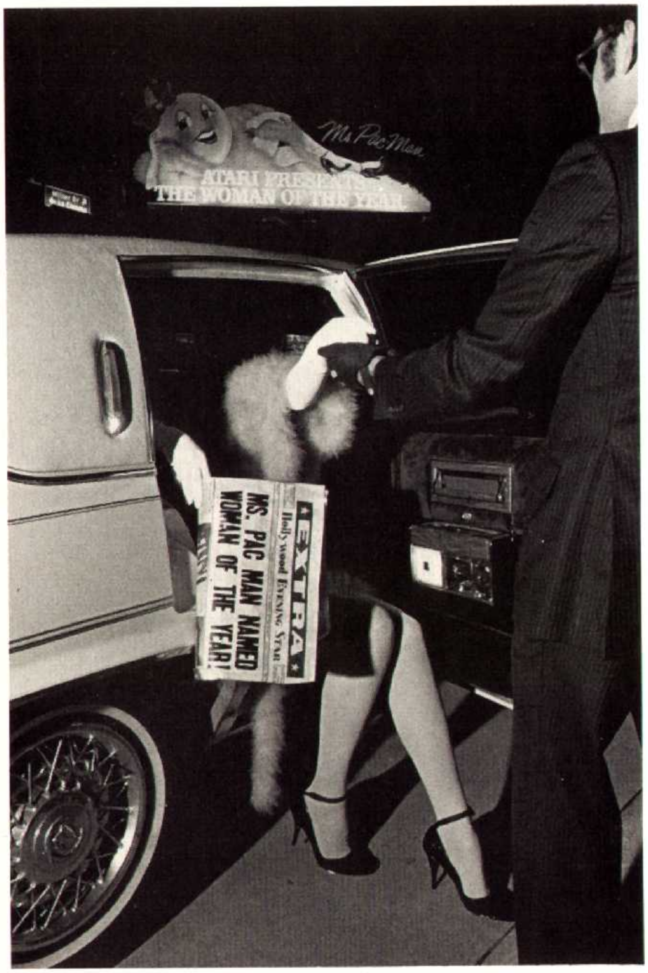
SAN JOSE—Last year Matthew Hubbard designed Activision's *Dolphin*, perhaps the first video game to use sound as a central element. When he's not designing video games, Hubbard uses sound in another way—he plays synthesizer in his own rock group, The Wonders of Science. The band has an "electro-pop" sound that is influenced by artists like David Bowie and Elvis Costello. Hubbard and his partner, Michael Dresbach, write all the songs, and their first album, *The Record of the Same Name*, is now

PHILLY DOC PLAYS CUPID

Physicians are starting to use computer games to teach medical students and hospital workers how to deal with emergencies without endangering the life of any patients.

Dr. Michael Barrett, pictured here, and two of his colleagues designed a game called *Cupid*, that teaches how to save a patient's life when there has been a cardiac arrest.





MS. PAC-MAN ARRIVES FOR COMPUTERS

She could have been just another boring sequel game, but she became the biggest-selling arcade game in history. She could have been a badly translated home video game like *Pac-Man*, but she was terrific. She could be a lousy computer game, but you know she's not. Our question is, why did computer owners have to wait eight months after her video game was released? Thankfully, *Ms. Pac-Man* is finally here.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARINA FALCO

available. Send $5 to: *The Wonders of Science, 887 Pacific Ave., San Jose, CA 95126.*

ZORK— THE FINAL FRONTIER

When she's in the air, Sally Ride is occupied with the computers on the space shuttle *Challenger.* But when she's at home, Sally tackles something even tougher—*Zork*. The nation's first woman astronaut is a big fan of the classic adventure game from Infocom. "*Zork* is going to drive me to my knees," Sally said in a recent interview.

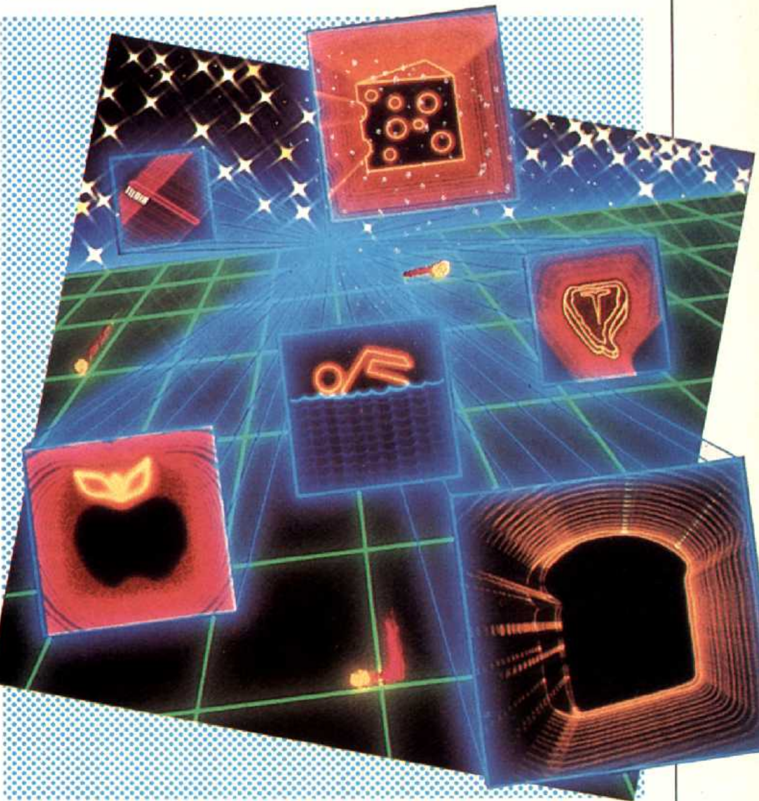
BLUE MAX II ON THE WAY

Bob Polin, author of Synapse Software's incredible *Blue Max*, is already working on the game's sequel, tentatively titled *Blue Max II*. The original, a 3D World War I aerial combat game, was our Computer Game of the Month last issue. Polin, by the way, was a professional blackjack player before he became a game designer. "I got tired of being thrown out of casinos ," he says. "I also got tired of pretending to be drunk or feebleminded so that my winning would look like luck instead of the result of my card-counting system."

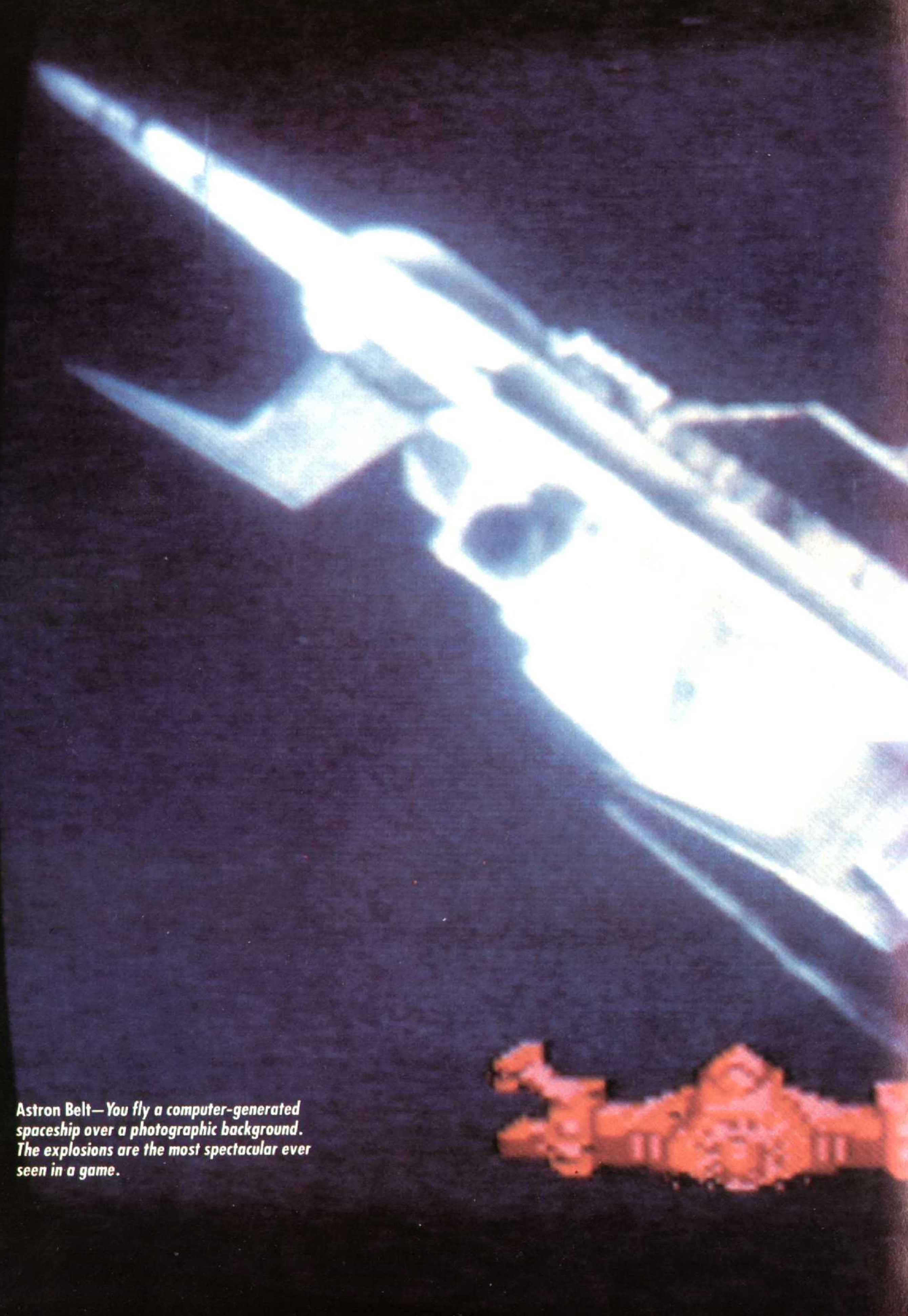
WIN A TRIP TO EPCOT!

Kraft is giving away a trip to Epcot Center/Walt Disney World to the person (18 or under only) who submits the best idea for a computer game that will teach children about nutrition. Type your idea in 500 words or less and send a sketch of the game screen (no larger than 11 x 14 inches) to: The Kraft Kideo Game Contest, P.O. Box 845, South Holland, IL 60473. You must be a resident of the U.S. and you must get your entry in by March 31. The Epcot trip will include round-trip airfare, hotel for three nights, passes, and $500 for expenses. Good luck!

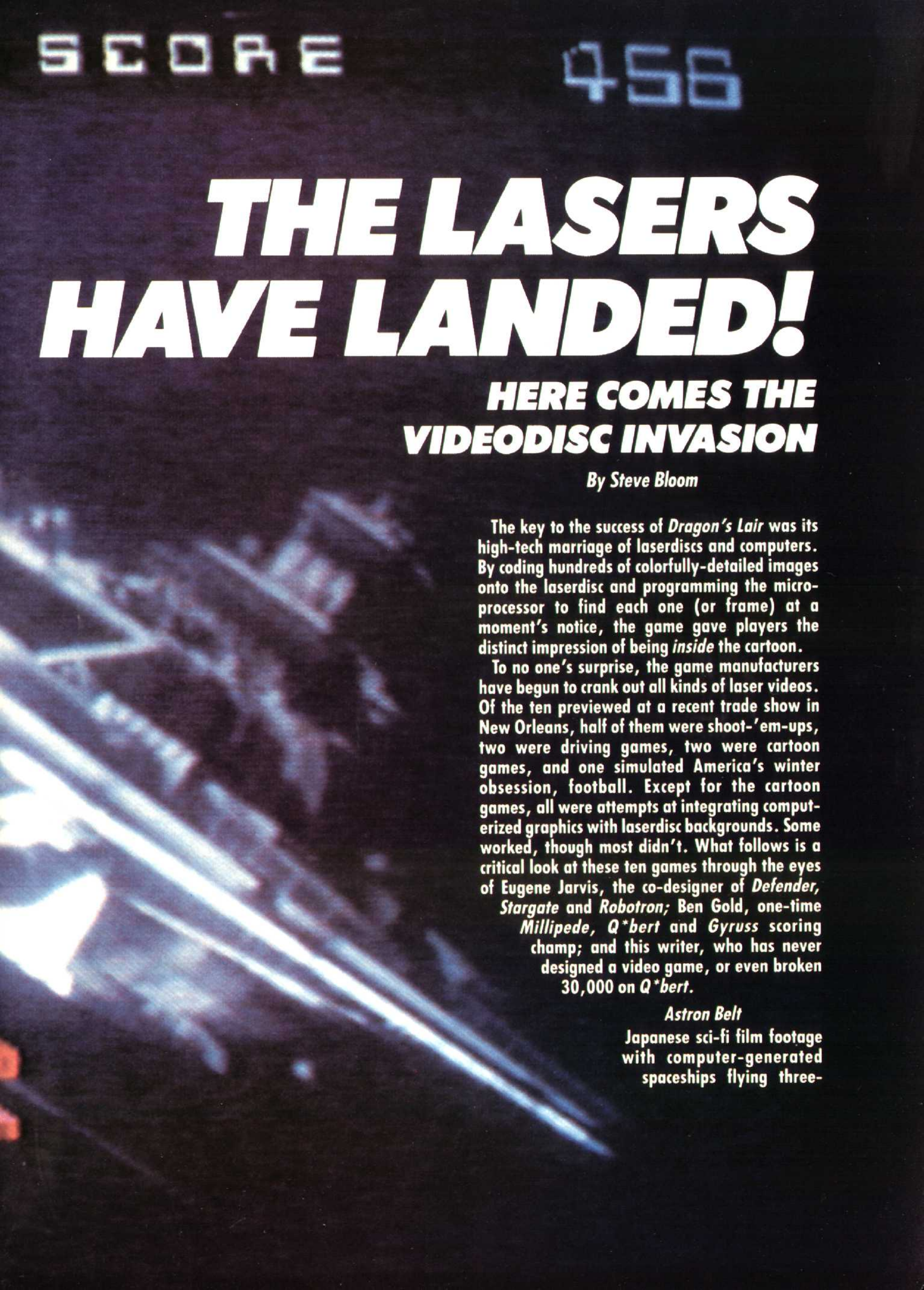
Bob Polin bombing the bridges



***Will your game be called* Quest for Cheese?**



Astron Belt—*You fly a computer-generated spaceship over a photographic background. The explosions are the most spectacular ever seen in a game.*



THE LASERS HAVE LANDED!

HERE COMES THE VIDEODISC INVASION

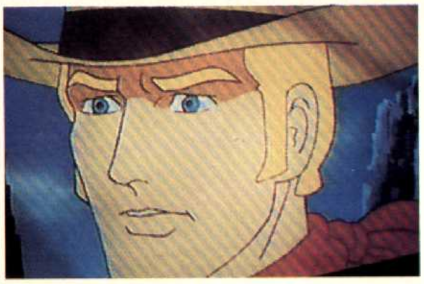
By Steve Bloom

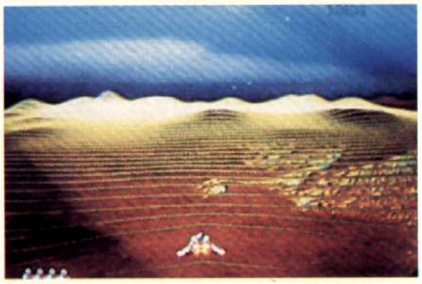
The key to the success of *Dragon's Lair* was its high-tech marriage of laserdiscs and computers. By coding hundreds of colorfully-detailed images onto the laserdisc and programming the microprocessor to find each one (or frame) at a moment's notice, the game gave players the distinct impression of being *inside* the cartoon.

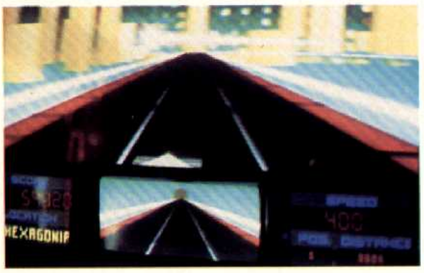
To no one's surprise, the game manufacturers have begun to crank out all kinds of laser videos. Of the ten previewed at a recent trade show in New Orleans, half of them were shoot-'em-ups, two were driving games, two were cartoon games, and one simulated America's winter obsession, football. Except for the cartoon games, all were attempts at integrating computerized graphics with laserdisc backgrounds. Some worked, though most didn't. What follows is a critical look at these ten games through the eyes of Eugene Jarvis, the co-designer of *Defender, Stargate* and *Robotron;* Ben Gold, one-time *Millipede, Q*bert* and *Gyruss* scoring champ; and this writer, who has never designed a video game, or even broken 30,000 on *Q*bert.*

Astron Belt

Japanese sci-fi film footage with computer-generated spaceships flying three-







LASERMANIA
***At left,* Sky Rider. *Continuing clockwise is* Goal To Go, Badlands, Cliff Hanger, Laser Grand Prix, Cube Quest, Inter Stellar Laser Fantasy, *and* The Laser Shuffle.**

dimensionally towards your ship. When you hit one of them, the screen switches to the same titantic, filmed explosion. Flying is simulated, but not very effectively.

Jarvis: "Has shoddy collision projection. You shoot, shoot, shoot, and then all of a sudden a ship blows up. But there is a certain power you get from taking one wimpy shot and blowing up the whole screen. I really like the canned gasoline explosion; it has a good macho feel to it. But, overall, it lacks a sense of realism. What's your objective? There are no real goals. It just feels like you're driving through boulders in somebody's backyard."

Gold: "It's like *Turbo*. You can die a hundred times in 50 seconds, but after that you only have one chance. That's unfair. It also repeats the same scenes and doesn't make much sense as a game. It's like you're in a movie, but you're not supposed to be there."

"You can take one wimpy shot and blow up the whole screen."

Badlands

This is an animated Western in which you play Buck, an honest-working-man-turned-vigilante when his family was murdered by an ornery gang of nomad thugs, led by Landolf. Using a palm-sized fire button, you must shoot snakes, lions and other predators while seeking the gang members, including Gas, Lloyd and the Paco bothers. The cartoon is Saturday morning quality, pretty cheap stuff.

Jarvis: "It's strictly a timing game. Strip away the game and what's left is a reaction meter. The high point for me is the shotgun. It has a great, loud effect."

Gold: "Is this a video game? All you do is press fire. I played it a few times and died, died, died. I didn't know what to do. Really, one of the worst."

Bega's Battle

Based on a Japanese cartoon created by Haruki Kadakowa Films, the game includes 40 scenes from the cartoon, but is limited to a shoot-'em-up that's superimposed on the screen. The object is to help Bega and Luna (whom Bega finds early in the game) save the world from the "dark forces." Sounds like *Star Wars*, you say? Unfortunately, it doesn't look anything like it.

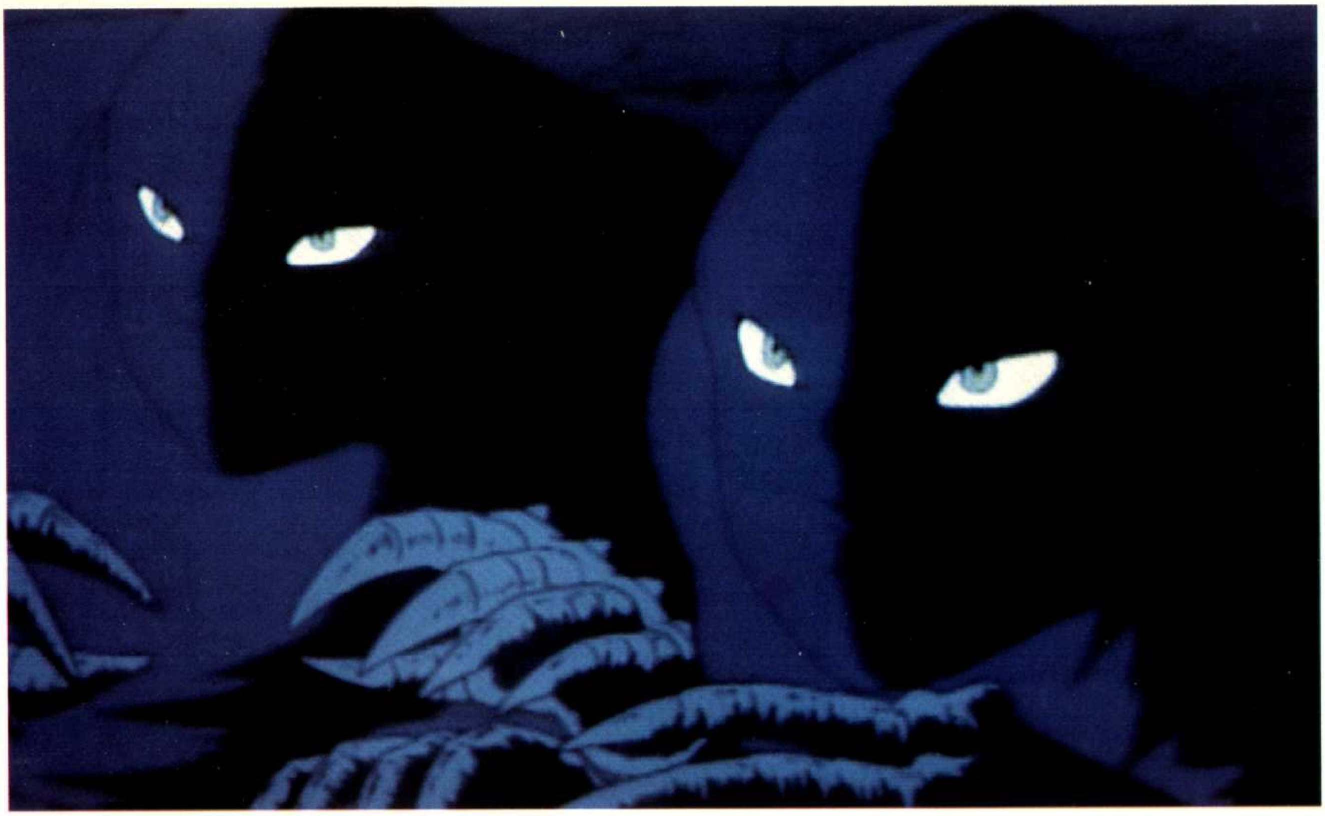
Jarvis: "It's such a throwback, sort of like a bad version of *Gorf*. I like the attract mode better than the game."

Gold: "A waste, I hated it . . . a really stupid game."

Cliff-hanger

This is the only laserdisc game so far to truly follow *Dragon's Lair's* lead. Stern bought the rights to a French-made feature-length cartoon that for some odd reason is popular in Japan. In fact, the character Cliff is known there as "Lupen," or more precisely, as "Lupen III." Apparently, he is the descendant of a line of Lupens that began with his grandfather.

Cliff Hanger has 13 different sequences, with as many as 30 decision points in a sequence. At each point a read-out at the bottom of the screen tells you to either use your stick (one of four ways) or action button (foot or hand). If you don't time



Cliff Hanger—*Originally a French cartoon, the voices were dubbed in English.*

the move just right, Cliff won't make it and the story can't go on. But it doesn't take much to figure out what you've done wrong. Go "down" when you should have gone "up" and the machine will tell you so. It's easy once you get the "hang" of it, and is a lot of fun to either watch or play. Ben Gold didn't agree.

Gold: "It's the ultimate waste game. I saw somebody who'd never played it before master it on his second game. It shouldn't take anyone more than $2 to do it. Any game that can be mastered so easily is a waste game, I'm sorry. You just have to sit there and experiment and before you know it you're already halfway through. Plus, it doesn't make any sense—first you're a bank robber, then you're the hero saving a princess, then you're attacked and you don't know why. Don't even compare it to *Dragon's Lair*."

Jarvis: "I like the animation, but as far as interactivity is concerned it falls on its face. The moves are too slow-paced—you sort of fall asleep, then make a move, then go back to sleep. That's wrong. Also, unlike *Dragon's Lair,* you get the same game every time; it's a straight story. It's like pay TV. Your reward for getting a move right is seeing the next couple of seconds of the story. It's a bizarre thing: discipline with rewards, like B.F. Skinner. Learn the codes and you get cool video in return. It's very highly structured. It guarantees you an interesting game as long as you give up all your control. One course of action is correct; if you err from the path you're dead. It's video communism. Personally, I don't want to work that hard, I don't want to think that much. I want to kill."

"The camera bounces up and down, but the digital cars don't."

Cube Quest

This collaboration between an ex-Atari engineer (Noah Anglin) and Bob Abel Associates (his company did some of the special effects in *Tron*) concentrates too much on aesthetics and too little on gameplay. Against Abel's dazzling computer-generated backgrounds we find a game with virtually no substance whatsoever. By choosing entry through one of 54 points on the cube, you are quickly shuttled into a corridor where objects swirl towards you. Shoot them and then move on to another corridor. And so on and so on, ad nauseum.

Gold: "Was the game finished? Because, if that's all there is to it, then it stinks. The laser effects were awesome. I'd like to see somebody combine vector graphics with a laser background—now *that* would be cool."

Jarvis: "The backgrounds are nice, but they have nothing to do with anything. It's really a poor version of *Tempest*. I got off on some of the objects that looked like chromosomes, though."

Goal to Go

The one and only attempt at a sports simulation so far, this one was just a prototype. Here's how it's supposed to work: using actual filmed footage of a football game (it looked like either semi-pro or high school action), you select plays on the offense and run them against what appears to be a pre-set defense. Pick "roll-out to the right," and that's what

"I don't want to think that much. I just want to kill things."

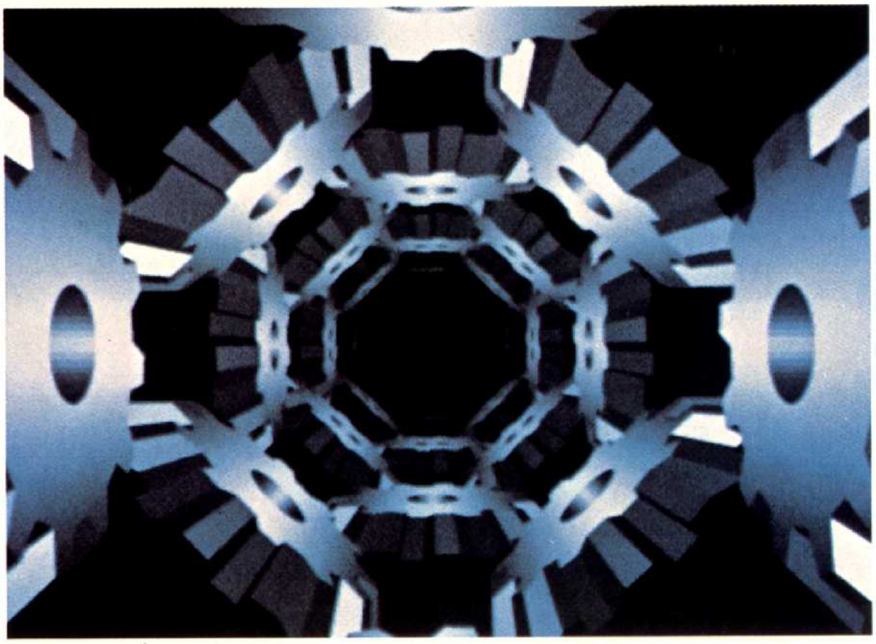
will happen if you move the joystick in the correct direction and time the play just right. Otherwise, the screen blanks and suddenly you've been sacked. Lots of grunts and crowd cheers included.

Interstellar Laser Fantasy

Similar to *Astron Belt*, *M.A.C.H. 3* and *Firefox*, you're flying a ship over a landscape, shooting at enemies flying toward you. Only here, the landscape is part realistic, part hallucinogenic grid pattern. This may be the best of the first wave of laser games. I just hope Funai, a company I never heard of, can get them out to the arcades.

Jarvis: I think this is one of the better laser games. There is at least a link between the backgrounds and the gameplay. It plays sort of like *Galaxian*."

Gold: "It reminds me of *Space Invaders*. It has a unique perspective, a really weird angle. I don't really understand how your ship starts off at the bottom and ends up in the middle of the screen. I think it's better than *Bega's Battle*."



Cube Quest—*Arcade game or acid trip?*

Laser Grand Prix

It would seem simple enough. Send a camera crew out to a local raceway, shoot plenty of live-action footage, transfer it to a disc, superimpose a computerized car on the screen and, voila, you have a driving game that should make *Pole Position* look like the funny-car races. But noooooooooooo! Taito sends a crew out on an off-day—an overcast, ugly off-day, mind you—and returns with some of the dullest footage since Kahoutek. But they go with it anyway—minus crowds, cars, banners, anything that would make you feel like you're enjoying a day at the races. And the digitized car floats all over the road, as if on a sheet of ice, sometimes even disappearing. Laserdisc video, at its best, should make you forget that you ever played conventional video. *Laser Grand Prix* makes you wish you were playing *Pole Position*.

Jarvis: "The concept is a natural for the laserdisc, but the implementation is a joke, a real farce. First of all, the track is grody, like you're somewhere in Indiana in the off-season. Second, the digital graphics are sloppy. You need nice, high-res graphics to compliment a disc background. Third, the camera bounces up and down, but the digital cars don't. Taito really screwed up a great concept. *Laser Grand Prix* could've been the hit of the show."

Gold: "It's a terrible driving game with cool backgrounds. If it had the handling of *Pole Position*, it could've been really good. It almost looks realistic, with the track dropping up and down, but they messed it up."

M.A.C.H. 3

This is one game that didn't get messed up. *M.A.C.H. 3* was the first true flying-simulation laserdisc game—and it works. Choose the "fighter" mission and you find yourself high over a Western landscape—mountains, cliffs, canyons and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

THE LASERDISC COMES HOME

The first generation of laser players for the home. Game machines are coming!

Right now all the excitement is in the arcades, but laserdiscs will soon be in our living rooms, and in fact some of them have already arrived. Right now we are using them mainly for listening to music and watching pre-recorded movies.

Briefly, here's how laserdiscs work—the discs are similar to conventional records, but instead of one long groove on each side, there are 54,000 individual bands—with one image on each band. Since a television displays 30 images every second, a disc can hold a half an hour of information on each side.

Within these bands are millions of tiny "micropits." These pits and the spaces between them correspond to frequency modulated signals, which can be translated into sound and pictures when they are hit by a low-powered helium-neon laser beam. As the disc spins at 1,800 revolutions per minute, the laser is reflected off the micropits to a light sensitive cell. The computer then turns this information into an audio and visual signal. The information stored in one laserdisc is the equivalent of 5,000 floppy discs.

Laserdiscs have been turned into interactive games because of their capacity for random access—the ability of the laser player to jump almost immediately from one point on the disc to any other point. So in a laserdisc game you save your onscreen hero from sure death with a well-timed tap of the joystick—the laser jumps to a different band on the disc and puts you in a new predicament. This would be impossible with videotape or film because you would have to sit and wait while they'd unspool. And unlike tape or records, a laserdisc is never touched by any stylus or recording heads—just a beam of light. So they never wear out and they can't be damaged by dust or dirt.

Dragon's Lair may have been a boon for the arcades, but it is raising havoc in the home video market. Coleco has announced that it will introduce a disc player compatible with Adam or ColecoVision sometime this year. The company's first release? *Dragon's Lair*, of course. (Coleco also owns the right-of-first-refusal for *Space Ace*, Don Bluth and company's second laserdisc effort.) Will people want to wait that long for *Dragon's Lair* to come home? "We think it has staying power," a Coleco spokesperson responded. Has Coleco considered converting *Dragon's Lair* to the cartridge format in the meanwhile? "I wouldn't rule out that possibility," said the spokesperson. Interesting.

The problem with the current disc players on the market (there are four: Magnavox, Sylvania, Pioneer and RCA) is that none is equipped with a microprocessor fast enough to keep up with *Dragon's Lair*'s pace. At least the Magnavox and Sylvania systems have interface jacks that allow them to be connected to a Z80 microprocessor such as the one found inside the Disc-Master 1000. But the price—$395—is practically what it would cost to buy one of the players. Clearly, disc manufacturers must come up with a solution to this problem if they hope to take advantage of this new at-home use for their products. Most probably, revised disc systems are being developed at this very moment.

This is not to say that games can't be played on the present systems. *Murder, Anyone?*, the first in a series of Mystery Discs from Vidmax, received a great deal of attention last year when it was released. Basically, it's an old-fashioned whodunit that's filmed from beginning to end. As private-eye Stew Cavanaugh, your job is to trace the steps of the murderer of millionaire Derrick Reardon. There are four key decision points and 16 possible solutions. Vidmax's follow-up disc is titled *Many Roads to Murder*. For more information, write: 36 E. 4 St., Suite 734, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

S.B.

"You can control the speed of the image and the way it scrolls."

all. There are targets below to hit, enemy craft to battle, and some pretty heady navigation is required in order to stay alive. The "bomber" mission is less exhilarating, but more strategic. It will remind you of *Xevious*.

Jarvis: "It's the best so far at integrating the theme with the graphics. It really fools you into thinking that you're flying. For now that's good enough, but they won't get away with that next year. They'll have to give you more control."

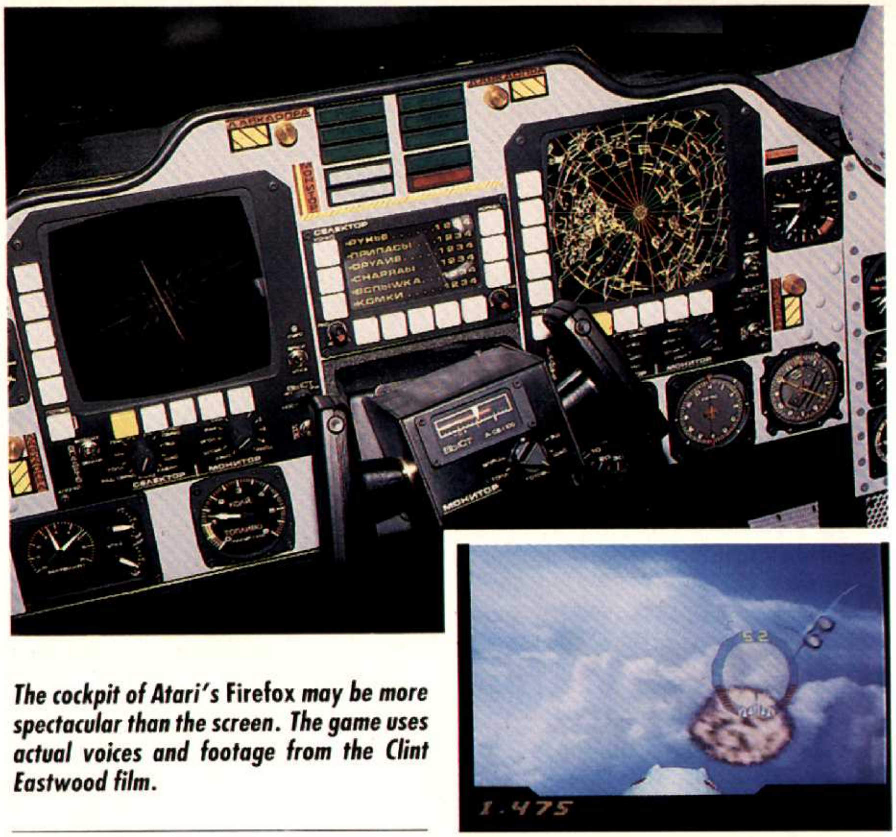
Gold: "It's definitely one of the top laser games. I prefer the fighter over the bomber mission. The problem is it gets too hard around 50-60,000 points. Everything gangs up on you at once, and, all of a sudden, boom, you're dead, boom, you're dead, boom, you're dead. It takes perfect timing to keep going. But I got sick of it after awhile. You don't play for gameplay, you play for the graphics."

Star Rider

Though it wasn't finished, *Star Rider* raised a lot of eyebrows in New Orleans. A computer-generated motorbike race set in a surrealistic future-world, it features a handlebar bike controller (complete with throttle, brake and a turbo button), a rear-view mirror screen just below the main screen, and graphics that you interact with, not just stare at. There will be nine different courses, and enemies who'll make your task that much more difficult (they had yet to be programmed in). *Star Rider* is a spectacular-looking game, almost hallucinatory. *Star Rider* is *Turbo* on acid.

Jarvis: "It's unique in that you can control the rate of speed of the image and how it scrolls left and right. That's the future—to allow the player to control the disc image. Even though there was no real game there yet, *Star Rider* has the best potential."

Gold: "It has a lot of gameplay already, and with the enemies it should be very impressive. You'll have to play it a lot to learn the course. It really has great sharp turns, and the rear-view mirror is a cool idea. I think it's the most promising game. I just hope they don't ruin it with the enemies."



The cockpit of Atari's **Firefox** *may be more spectacular than the screen. The game uses actual voices and footage from the Clint Eastwood film.*

Though it may be in the arcades by the time you read this, Atari's much anticipated *Firefox* didn't make it to the show in New Orleans. The game uses actual footage from the recent Clint Eastwood movie. Briefly, *Firefox* combines scenes from the movie with digital images, like most of the games already discussed. Players will be asked to assume the role of Major Gant (Eastwood) and steal the Firefox plane from the Soviet Union. A battle between you and a fleet of Soviet MIGs ensues. Fortunately, Atari has equipped *Firefox* with the same trigger-switch flight controls found in *Star Wars*.

Two other moderately-hyped games that failed to show up in New Orleans were Don Bluth and Cinematronics' second laserdisc effort, *Space Age*, and Laser Games' *Eon and the Time Tunnel*. The former should be out any day while the latter has been temporarily shelved because the "technology is too sophisticated for the audience," according to a company spokesperson. *Eon* is an adventure game set in an actual Welsh castle; it was supposed to utilize the company's own dual-disc technology. For whatever the reason, Laser Games has sold a game called *Pitchman* to Stern instead. *Pitchman* is a target-shooting game featuring a Dr. Slye who mysteriously roams through rooms in a carnival-type scenario.

All of this indicates that there may be as many as a dozen laserdisc games fighting for space in local arcades this spring. And this is only the beginning. If the games prove profitable, laserdiscs may do to conventional video what video did to pinball. But the games will have to improve significantly before any such thing occurs.

Another question is in which direction the gamemakers will take this new, far-reaching technology. Already we're bombing real landscapes—no longer abstract, computerized worlds—and setting our sights on Russian MIGs. How close will they tread towards reality? Predicts Eugene Jarvis: "Next year you'll get to be Clint Eastwood blowing away some punk on the screen. You'll see blood and guts and brains flying. That's next year, no question. Or you'll be a burglar being pursued by Dirty Harry. Accidentally, you trip on a skateboard and you get mauled by a German Shepherd. We ain't seen nothing yet."

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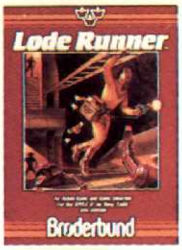
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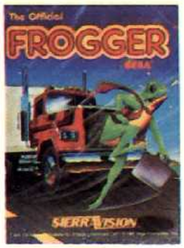
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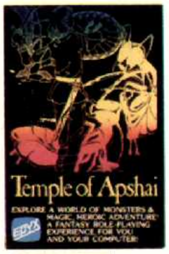
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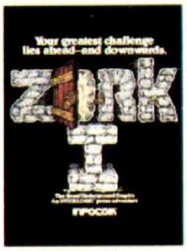
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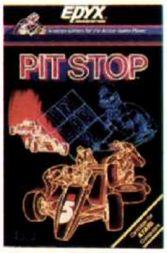
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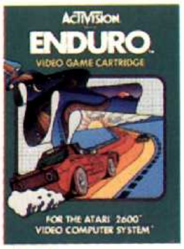
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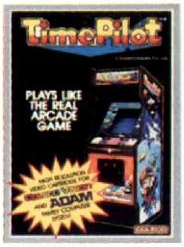
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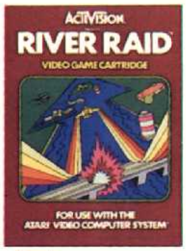
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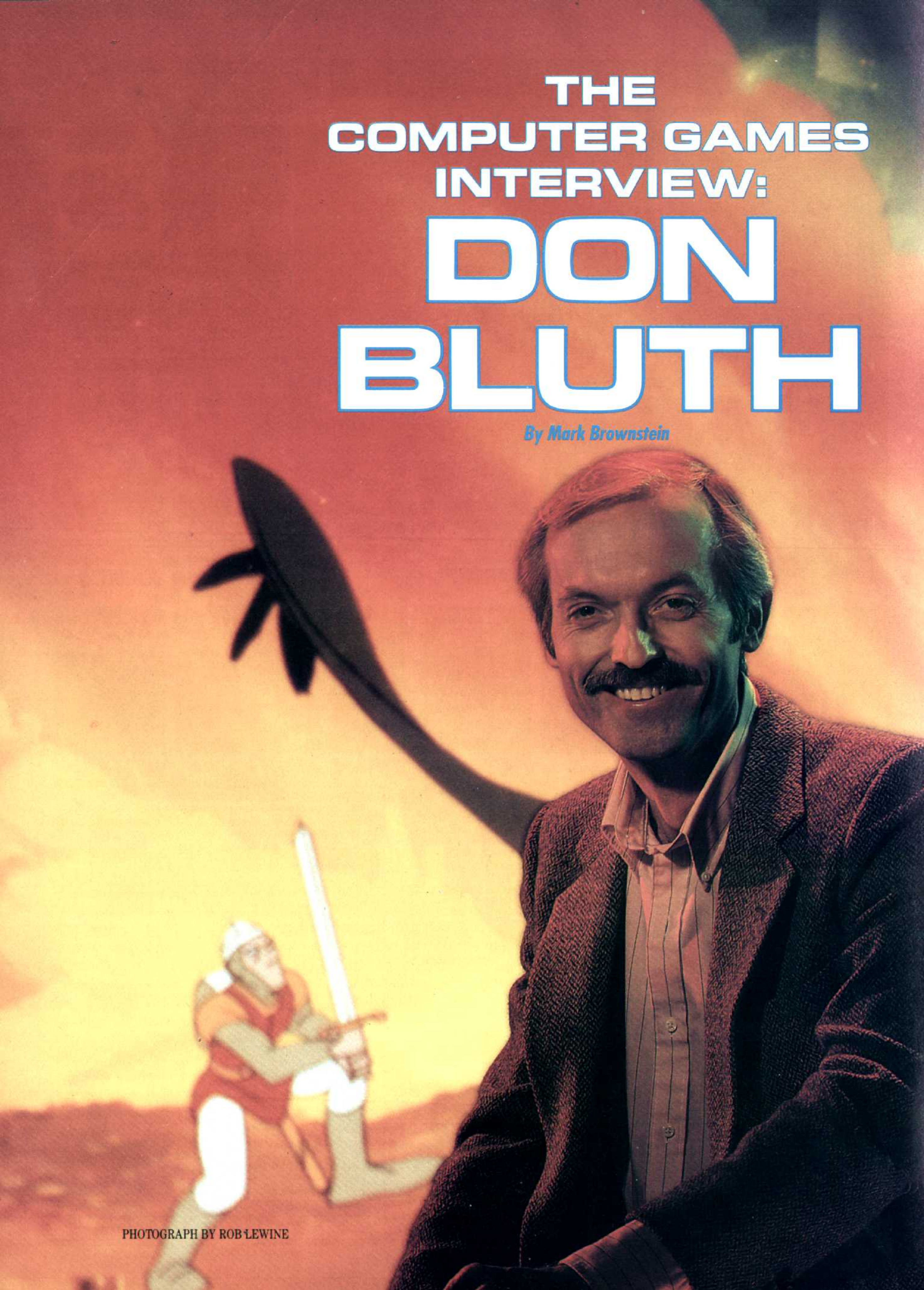
THE COMPUTER GAMES INTERVIEW:

DON BLUTH

By Mark Brownstein



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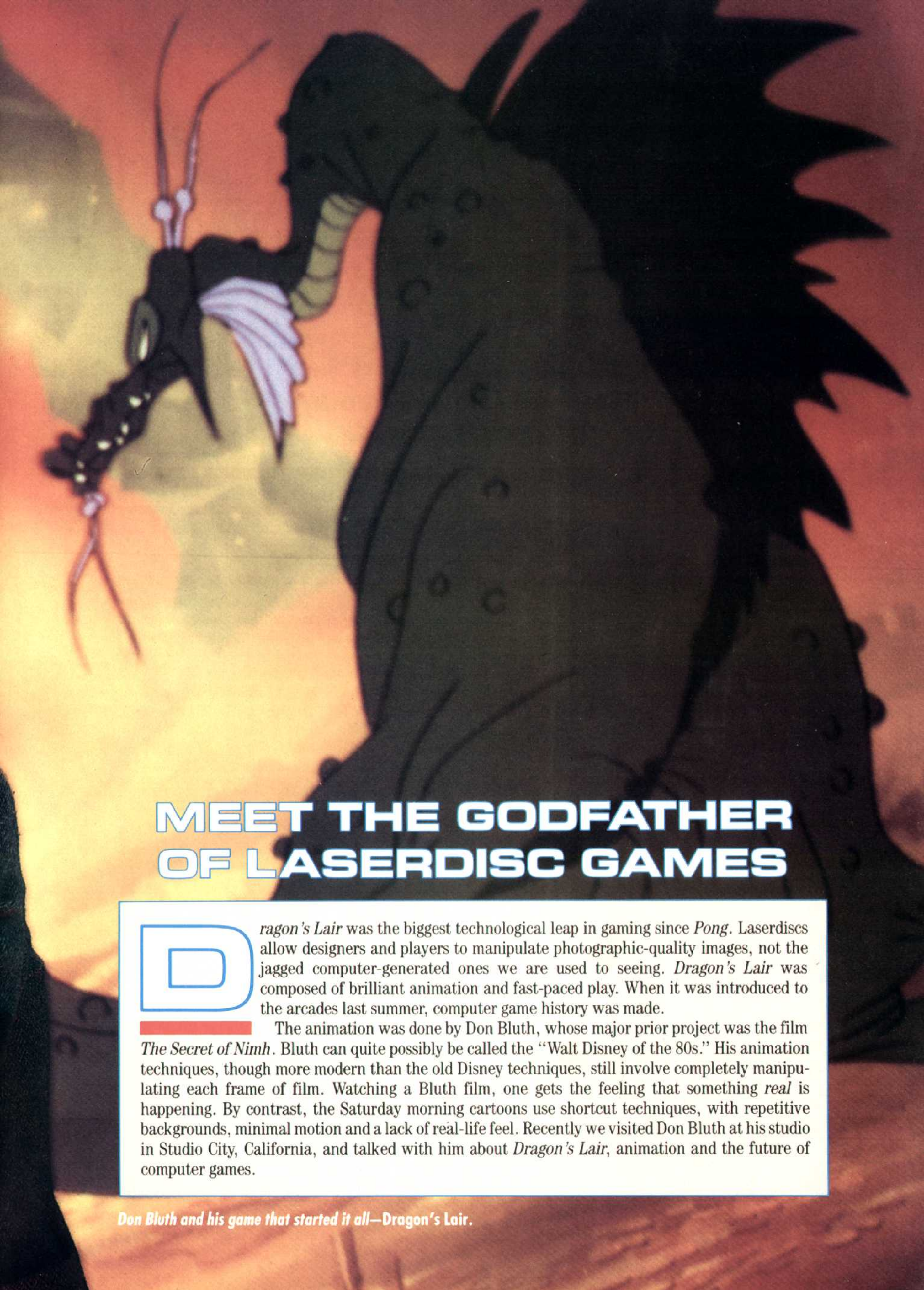


MEET THE GODFATHER OF LASERDISC GAMES

D*ragon's Lair* was the biggest technological leap in gaming since *Pong*. Laserdiscs allow designers and players to manipulate photographic-quality images, not the jagged computer-generated ones we are used to seeing. *Dragon's Lair* was composed of brilliant animation and fast-paced play. When it was introduced to the arcades last summer, computer game history was made.

The animation was done by Don Bluth, whose major prior project was the film *The Secret of Nimh*. Bluth can quite possibly be called the "Walt Disney of the 80s." His animation techniques, though more modern than the old Disney techniques, still involve completely manipulating each frame of film. Watching a Bluth film, one gets the feeling that something *real* is happening. By contrast, the Saturday morning cartoons use shortcut techniques, with repetitive backgrounds, minimal motion and a lack of real-life feel. Recently we visited Don Bluth at his studio in Studio City, California, and talked with him about *Dragon's Lair*, animation and the future of computer games.

Don Bluth and his game that started it all—Dragon's Lair.

CG: How did you get started as an artist?

Bluth: I'm flattered that somebody called me an artist. I think it goes back many, many years ago to when I was six years old and I saw my first animated film, which was *Snow White*. I became very interested in animation, not art. I only came to learn later that animation was part of the arts. So I became interested in that fantasy world that was very real, that you could get involved in, that really turned your emotions on.

I went back to see the picture many times, and became a fan of the Disney pictures, particularly the early ones. As I grew up, the child in me never did. I said, "That's what I want to do for a living." So I went to Disney, and worked there for a while when Walt was still there.

CG: Why did you leave the company?

Bluth: Mainly because when Walt Disney was there, he was the catalyst that made the company operate. Without him it's like a body without a head. So it doesn't really have the art function it had when he was there. He seemed to sense what the public would like in a story. He knew what would entertain them. He knew what would make money at the box office. So all of those visionary things that he had seem to be lacking.

CG: Let's talk about *Dragon's Lair*. How did you get involved in this project?

Bluth: *Dragon's Lair* came at a time when we were probably at our lowest ebb. We had just finished doing *Secret of NIMH*, which was not a box office smash. We were wondering whether we were going to go out of business, and whether all this would end with a whimper.

A man named Rick Dyer, of Advanced Microcomputer Systems, came to us one day and said, "I saw *Secret of NIMH*. How would you like to animate the first laserdisc game?" And I knew something about the figures in the arcade game industry at the time. It was something like nine billion dollars, compared to about three billion in the movie industry. I decided to give it a shot.

It took us about six months and $1,300,000 to produce the animation. And there's 22 minutes of animation in *Dragon's Lair*. If you play the game without any mistakes, you'll see six minutes of animation from beginning to end. But all the options that you have make 22 minutes.

The game was very difficult. We stumbled several times. We animated things that didn't work and spent a lot of money. When we first tested it, a lot of people looked at it and said "Oh wow," and a lot of other people looked at it and said, "but there ain't no game there."

> **"What's exciting about our videodisc games is that we don't have to look at those sticks and dots anymore!"**

So we came home, and we said we have to be sure there really *is* an exciting game. We didn't want to fall in the trap of building a game like other arcade games. This is different. This is a random access game.

CG: Why was *Dragon's Lair* so successful?

Bluth: What's exciting about *Dragon's Lair* is not particularly the game, but the vision that it opens up. Think—we won't have to look at those abysmal sticks and dots anymore! We can get Hollywood involved, start looking at photography, what our eyes are used to seeing. And it can be as entertaining, as tickling, as spine-tingling as you want it to be. That's really exciting.

CG: Does the two-second delay in access time create a problem?

Bluth: It doesn't seem to bother the players. It *does* seem to bother those who are watching it. When I play the game it doesn't bother me at all, it gives me a moment to relax. *Space Ace* is 50% faster in its decision making than *Dragon's Lair*.

CG: Who wrote the script for *Dragon's Lair*? Did you have any input other than the animation?

Bluth: When Rick Dyer and his group came to us, they brought some scripts. They had been working on this sword and sorcery thing for years. I got very much involved and suggested several changes. It became a group effort. We worked on the story together from that point.

CG: What kind of computer systems did you use to do the animation?

Bluth: We used no computers to do the animation. It's all cell animation, so it's all hand-drawn. It's a style of animation I call classical animation.

CG: How many people did you use to make *Dragon's Lair*?

Bluth: Our production staff was about 70 people. That includes all the artisans.

CG: Do you see any future simultaneous introduction of arcade and home games?

Bluth: Yes, I do. But if I were going to go into the home market, I would make games specifically for that audience, the same as I would make PG and G-rated films. They're two different things. I'd make the game slower, more relaxed for the home. The game in the arcade is a frenetic game. Everyone in the arcade is keyed up, busy, they're usually there with a girlfriend or boyfriend. It's all a big circus.

CG: Do you think computer-generated graphic video games are dead?

Bluth: It is my opinion that they are. They're still plugged in on life support, but I think those things died the first few months since *Dragon's Lair*'s release.

CG: Do you think computers will put animators out of business?

Bluth: That question is the same as "Will machines ever put people out of business?" I think the answer is no.

CG: What about computer-assisted animation? You can define a character, give him him ten or fifteen different movements.

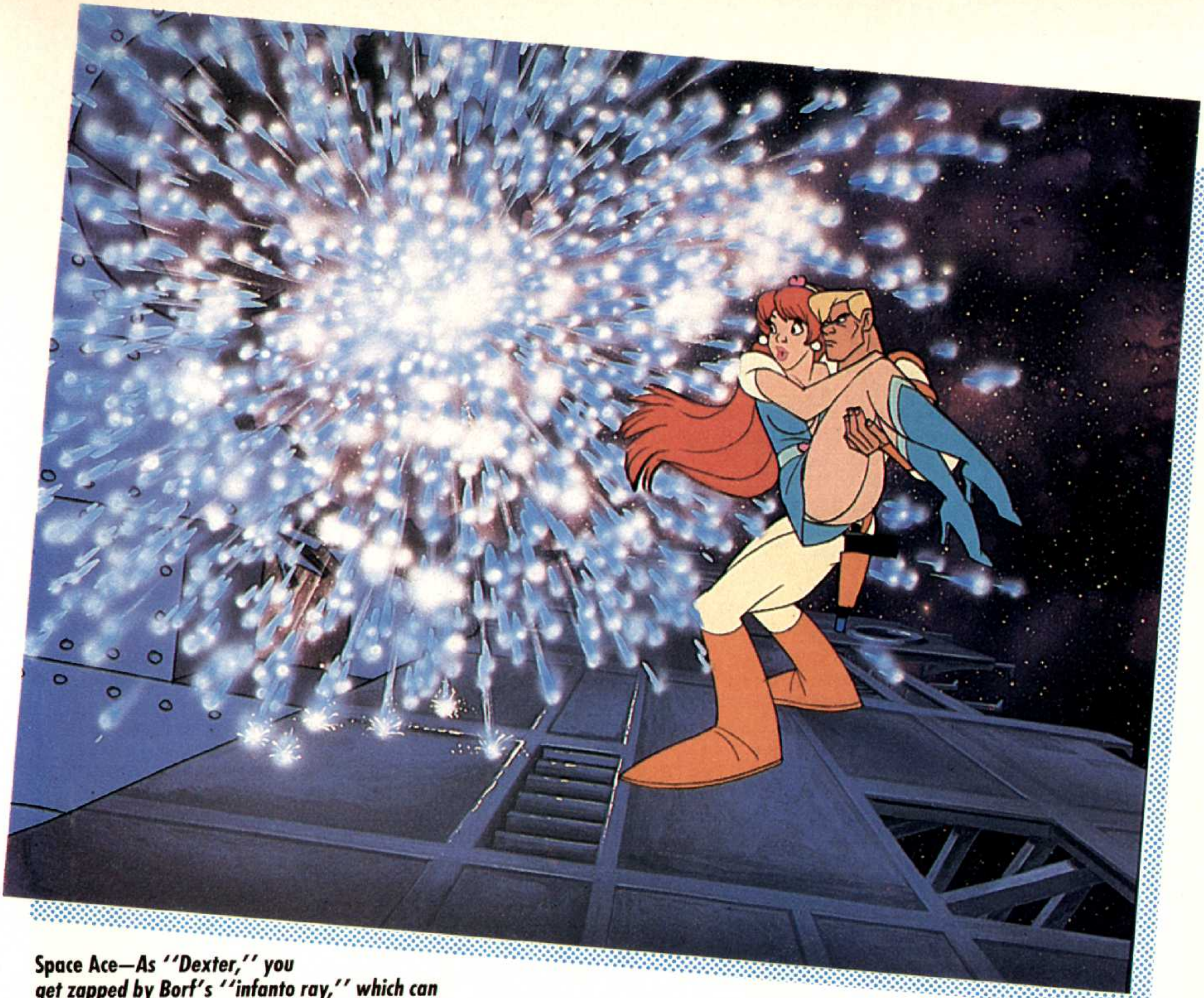
Bluth: That's valid. I've done a lot of poking around with computer-generated graphics and animation, and it's as difficult to do as cell animation, it costs almost the same, around $90-$100,000 a minute. It's a tool, like any other tool. If it's used wisely in the hands of the artist, it can be very effective. If you don't know how to use it, it's just a waste of money.

My first goal is to get the viewer to look at this and jump up and down. I want him to get excited. He's paying fifty cents, I want him to enjoy that. So I'm going to give him everything I know how. Whatever tools I have to use, whether it's a computer or putting in a car tied onto the end of a rope and dragging it through town, I'll do it.

CG: Tell us about *Dragon's Lair II*.

Bluth: I tried to get something that we haven't seen before, so it doesn't look exactly like *Dragon's Lair*. I thought it would be interesting if Daphne looked just as beautiful as ever; there's absolutely no sign she's been through anything. And Daphne is beguiled or taken away again by the Wizard and put into a trance. The Wizard plans on marrying Daphne and making her the queen of the Underworld.

But to marry her, he has that famous



Space Ace—As "Dexter," you get zapped by Borf's "infanto ray," which can turn everyone in the world into babies.

ring called the Ring of the Nebelungen, which is the big ring that Wagner wrote about. If you have this ring you have power over anything in the world, but you must forsake all love. So the Wizard has this ring. It's locked tight in a box with a timer and when it opens, he can put it on her finger and she becomes his. He has to keep her out of Dirk's hands until that box can be opened, then he can marry her.

Now this is what the Wizard does. He gets Daphne and doesn't just move her around in *space*, he moves her around in *time*, so she goes through history and the future.

Dirk goes back to the castle, where he finds a time machine. And it says, "I know where they'll be because that Wizard was my brother when I was alive. When there's trouble in history, that's where you'll find the Wizard."

So they begin to travel throughout the halls of time, encountering the Wizard. And the Wizard has all these allies, the evil men in time. We'll see Blackbeard the Pirate, King Henry the Eighth, and Black Bart out West. A lot of different textures will be in here as Dirk travels around, trying to get Daphne back.

I have a surprise in the game that I'm not even going to reveal right now. It's not a technique, exactly, but I think it's going to be fun for everybody.

CG: Other than *Dragon's Lair*, which video games do you like to play?

Bluth: I really have not played video games as much since I started *making* them. I love *Donkey Kong*. I liked *Frogger*, for some reason. I guess because it's a game of timing. I thought that was a fun game. I'm not as attracted to *Ms. Pac-Man*. I like *Pac-Man*. It's a board game, but your viewpoint never changes, you're always looking down at this board. The interesting thing with the laserdisc games is that because of photography, your point of view is *always* changing, which means that you have to keep thinking. You're reorienting yourself all the time.

CG: Why do you think the *Secret of NIMH* didn't achieve the success of *Dragon's Lair*?

Bluth: I used to lament this until I realized that *Bambi*, *Pinocchio* and *Fantasia* did not make money on their first release. The reason, I think, is that the audience has to be prepped to see an animation film. If they're not prepped they don't know what they're looking at.

CG: What's the future of laser games?

Bluth: I think we have a long way to go. People are very gregarious, we're fun-loving and we love playing games just like all the animals do in the animal kingdom. But we've got brains and we have reason, so the games have to be sophisticated. They have to touch familiar cords inside us, and the game designer's job is a big one—it's very challenging. He must design a game that appeals to the human psyche and will offer a challenge, while at the same time not rob him of his ego. We'll see games that are very different from what we've seen in the past.

THE HOTLINE

Up-to-the-minute gaming news

NEW YORK...LONDON...PARIS...MILPITAS...

There's lots of last minute news, so let's get to it...SYNAPSE to release Commodore 64 version of ZAXXON. They claim it's an improvement on ARCADE game. They are also developing ALL-TEXT games--written by FAMOUS authors...BALLY to release laserdisc NFL FOOTBALL to the arcades. The game boasts 400 actual plays from SAN DIEGO CHARGERS and LA RAIDERS games...DRAGON's LAIR has been licensed for everything from PLASTIC FIGURINES to FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION HATS to UNDERWEAR. ATARI, not CINEMATRONICS, will be building the game for England and EUROPE...If you're having any technical problems with your INFOCOM games, call their TECH HOTLINE: (617) 576-3190.

Before the IBM PCjr was announced, SECURITY was so tight, the machines were not put in any room with WINDOWS...SHARP has just released a new TV in JAPAN that contains an on-board 8K COMPUTER with a game cartridge slot...Citizens in ALBUQUERQUE are enraged that video games have been put in the county JAIL for the prisoners. Let's hope they didn't get BREAKOUT...BRODERBUND to introduce BANK STREET SPELLER to pair with BANK STREET WRITER...Title of the month: FUNGUS FIREWORKS, by QDI...DATASOFT is looking for game designers. For a free guide, write to them at 9421 Winnetka Ave., Chatsworth, CA 91311...KRAFT has reduced the prices on all their JOYSTICKS...Two more Q*BERT CLONES arrived too late for our article--J*BIRD (Orion Software) for Apple, and OVER THE RAINBOW (City Software) for Commodore 64...

One of the PIONEERS of video games is working with both COLECO and SYNAPSE, and he's not NOLAN BUSHNELL. BUSHNELL, in the meantime, finally returned to video games with SENTE's first game, SNAKE PIT. It utilizes a joystick AND track ball at the same time. Bushnell hopes to revolutionize the arcade industry with permanent game cabinets that accept CARTRIDGES like home game systems. Right now, an arcade manufacturer has to buy a whole new cabinet for each new game.

STEVE NERUDA was the WINNER of our NAME THAT ALIEN contest. He receives an ACTIVISION cartridge library...They are about to release PITFALL II...Also on the way is a parody of ZORK called DORK I--THE MEDIOCRE EMPIRE...A company in GEORGIA has created a device called ULTRA SHOCK that hooks up to arcade games and delivers static ELECTRIC SHOCKS while you play...

INFOWORLD Magazine reports that 25% of all personal computer owners are no longer USING their computers...Keep an eye out for a new data storage system--OPTICAL DISKS. Industry watchers are predicting they will eventually REPLACE magnetic tapes and floppy disks...ATARI recently assisted in breaking up a $1.5 million stolen goods and narcotics ring in SAN JOSE. They donated arcade games to help police in "OPERATION WASP." In a similar story, Atari designer DAVE THEURER (TEMPEST) recently gave chase and caught a HIT AND RUN driver who had rammed into a 15-year-old boy, severing his spine. Theurer convinced the driver to turn himself in.

CREATIVE SOFTWARE and FUNWARE will no longer develop software for the TI 99/4A. But owners of that computer will still get product from ATARISOFT, IMAGIC, and TEXAS INSTRUMENTS, at least for this year...An UNDERGROUND group called the "ANTI-IBM GORILLA ORGANIZATION" is out to bust the PCjr, calling it, "a piece of JUNK that will give microcomputers a BAD NAME." They are selling $5 bumper stickers promoting their cause.

For ALL you PEOPLE who WRITE and ASK us the world records on your favorite game, Walter "Keeper of the High Scores" Day has something for you--a computerized list of the FIVE TOP SCORES on 230 arcade games and the players who achieved them. For the most recent printout, send $7 to: Twin Galaxies, 226 East Main St., Ottumwa, IA 52501.

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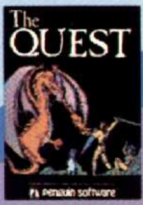

The QUEST
penguin software

The Coveted Mirror
penguin software

Arcade Fun

THE SPY STRIKES BACK
penguin software

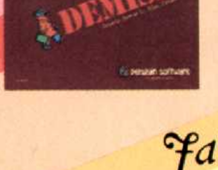
BOUNCING KAMUNGAS
penguin software

MINIT MAN
penguin software

CRIME WAVE
penguin software

THUNDERBOMBS
penguin software

PIE-MAN
penguin software


SPY'S DEMISE
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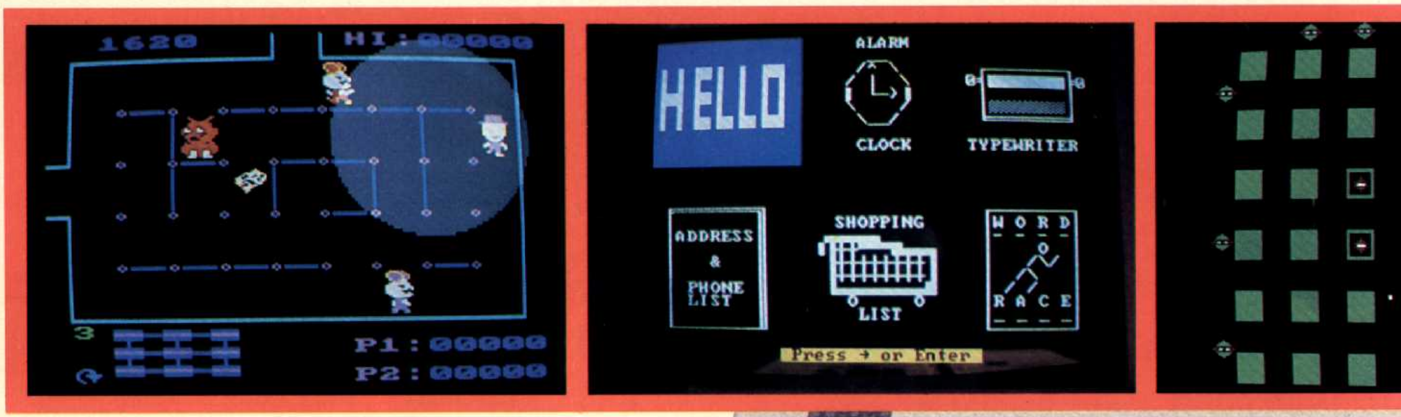
Hands-on Report:

THE IBM PCjr

It may be the machine of the year-but should you buy it?

By Jay Howard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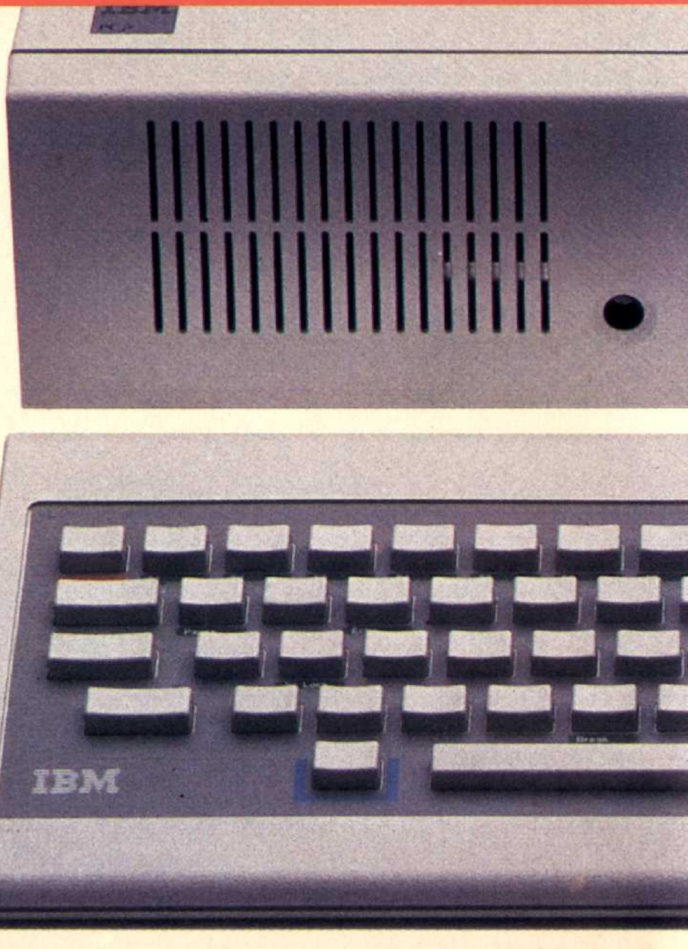


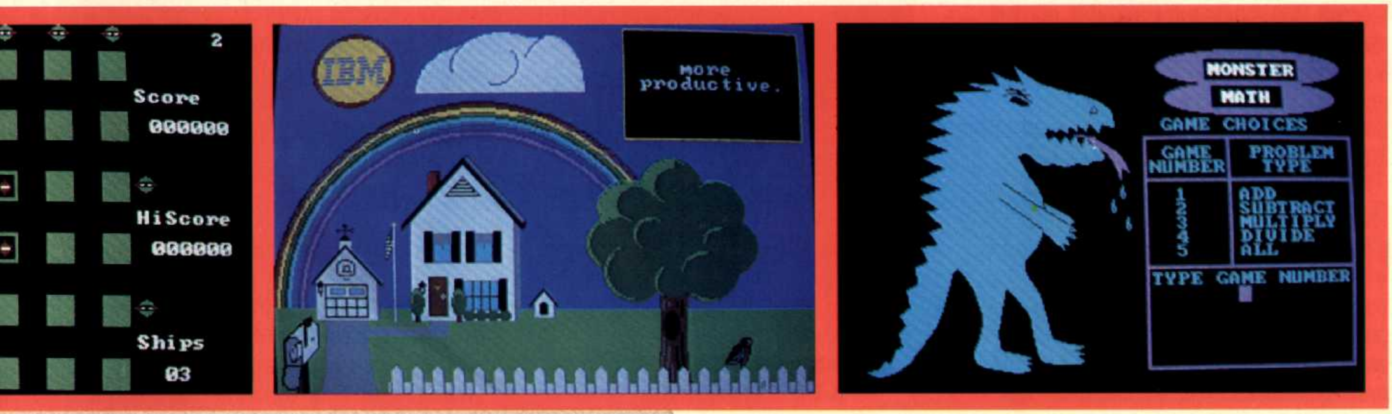
The only home computer that has a cordless keyboard, PCjr utilizes a unique infrared signal to communicate with the system unit. It works on a line-of-sight basis from up to twenty feet away.

After months of waiting and innumerable speculative reports by industry experts, IBM has finally introduced its home computer. Referred to in the press by its internal code name, Peanut, the new computer is officially called PC*jr* and is essentially a stripped-down, crippled version of IBM's popular PC computer.

Fearful that many businessmen would buy this substantially cheaper computer instead of the IBM PC, the company has limited the amount of random access memory that the computer can have to 128K and has made it difficult to add accessory cards (by limiting the number of expansion slots available). The new computer comes in two versions: one with 64K of RAM and no disk drive for $669 and one with 128K of memory and one disk drive for $1269. Both units contain two slots into which cartridges can be inserted.

The less expensive unit can only display 40 columns of text on a television set or video monitor (neither are included with the system). The system can be upgraded to the more expensive one later on if desired.

The expanded PC*jr* adds the ability to use the higher density video modes and also permits the display of 80 columns of text per line. The 80-column display mode requires a video monitor. The upgrade takes the form of a card that plugs into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ADD
SUBTRACT
MULTIPLY
DIVIDE
ALL
TYPE GAME NUMBER

After a game of* Mouser *(far left) or* Crossfire *(center), you can use the PC* jr *for a variety of home applications. Some are presented in the* Sampler *(second from left) that comes with the disk drive. Or learn at home with educational software (above).

a connector on the computer's main system board.

Aside from its expansion limitations, the computer is fairly compatible with the IBM PC. It uses the same 8088 microprocessor and the expanded version uses a compatible 360K double-sided, double density disk drive. A half-height drive is used, and there is no room to install another one in the same cabinet.

KEYBOARD IS DISAPPOINTING

One of the big drawbacks of the PC *jr* is its keyboard. Although IBM usually does its homework and tries to learn from others mistakes, it's failed to do so with regard to the keyboard on the PC *jr*. Like so many other manufacturers that have entered the consumer computer marketplace, IBM has decided that the place to save money on the computer was the keyboard—so they've used one that is not like a typewriter keyboard, but is of the cheaper, often used "chiclet" variety.

As if that weren't enough, IBM decided not to put any markings on the keys, but opted instead to put them on the spaces between the keys, insuring that the markings would be harder to see and the keyboard more difficult to use. IBM's rational behind this, according to demonstrators who showed the computer at a recent press conference, was that since all of the keys on the keyboard are user-programmable, overlays can be used to assign new functions to the keys, permitting only the keys used to be labelled.

While the keyboard has only 62 keys on it, through the use of a special function key and color coding, all of the 83 key functions present on the IBM PC can be implemented. A novel function included in the keyboard is an infrared transmitter that permits cordless operation of the keyboard from up to 20 feet away. This cordless feature requires that four AA batteries be installed in the keyboard unit. This may seem like a nice feature, but it can have several disadvantages. To begin with, IBM says that if the infrared mode is being used (instead of the optional direct-wired mode) only one computer can be used in the room. That's not so bad, because most of us won't have more than one in the house anyway. However, if someone walks in front of the keyboard while you're using it, you'll lose some information.

The most serious shortcoming however, is related to the batteries. If they remain in the keyboard for an extended period of time, it's possible that they will leak and damage the unit. If that happens with the keyboard, you may have to get the whole thing replaced, and that can be expensive.

> **"If you walk in front of the keyboard, you can lose data."**

By the way, if you're planning to use the wired connection, which I suspect most people will do, be prepared to shell out an extra $20 for the 6-foot piece of wire, because it doesn't come with the computer.

TWO VERSIONS OF BASIC AVAILABLE

The PC *jr* comes with a BASIC interpreter built into its internal ROMs. This is known as Cassette BASIC and it provides all of the necessary cassette tape recorder input and output functions. If you want to get extended BASIC, which IBM calls Cartridge BASIC, you'll have to pay an additional $75 for the cartridge. This version of BASIC also supports DOS, structured directories, date and time.

SQUEEZING OUT EVERY LAST PENNY

The price of IBM's latest entry is far from being competitive with other home computers. The Commodore 64, for example, which also contains 64K of RAM, cost less than $200. This contrasts with the 64K PC*jr*, which costs $669. You'd think that with all the extra money IBM is charging, the least they could do is give you a complete system. But they don't. In addition to having to pay $20 for the keyboard cord, you have to fork over another $20 for an adapter cable to use the unit with the IBM Color Display. If you want to save money and use your TV instead, they still get you, this time for $30 for a TV connector. And if you want to save your programs out on cassette, they get you again, for another $30 for a cassette cable adapter.

ONLY PARTLY COMPATIBLE

Just because the IBM PC and the IBM PC *jr* are designed by the same company and use the same microprocessor, don't assume that all programs for one will be compatible with the other. One thing that makes programs incompatible was mentioned earlier, the memory limitation. If a program requires more than 128K of RAM, forget about using it on the PC *jr*. Fortunately, most home applications don't need that much memory. Another compatibility problem crops up with the operating system. The new computer uses an upgraded, and incompatible, version of DOS known as PC DOS 2.10.

Software developers are already busily at work modifying and adapting their programs to work on the PC *jr*, so that by the time it becomes available in the first quarter of 1984, there should be plenty of applications programs available.

A lot of software will most likely utilize the medium-resolution mode, whose 320 × 200 capability equals that of the Commodore 64. But the entry model only supports two colors, while you get 16 with the C-64. For the finest graphics, look to software that use the PC*jr*'s remarkable 640 × 200 high-res mode, with four colors in the basic model and 16 in the other.

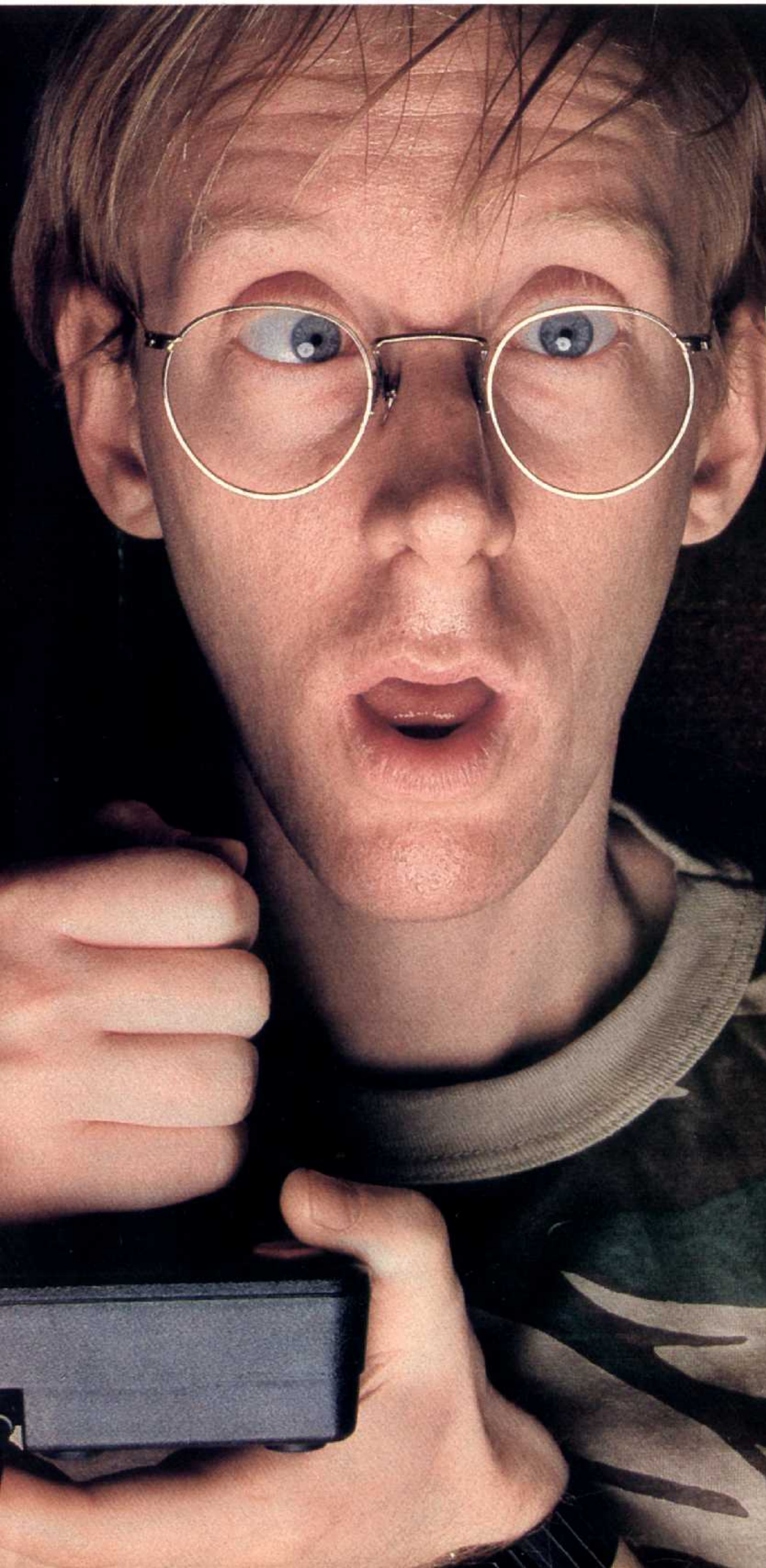
Gamers can look forward to a raft of software, much of it to be released around the time the PC *jr* hits the shelves. Sierra On-line's *Crossfire* is already on cartridge (though it lacks the theme music of earlier versions), and that company is converting *Jawbreaker II, Oil's Well, Frogger, Wizard of Id, Mr. Cool* and *Ultima II*. Infocom says its entire line of all-text games will soon be ready for the new IBM, and Sirius is converting some of its PC games, though they won't say which.

The IBM joystick is a solid piece of workmanship that provides excellent control. It's switchable between self-centering and free-floating, and has two fire buttons. Unlike the PC, the PC *jr* accommodates two controllers at a time.

BEST WARRANTY IN THE BUSINESS

One very strong plus for the PC *jr* is its 12-month warranty. This contrasts with most other manufacturers, who only warranty their products for three months, and goes a long way toward instilling consumer confidence. So if you're looking for a computer from a manufacturer with a solid reputation, one that will stand behind its product, the PC *jr* may be for you. But if you're looking for a low-cost home computer, look somewhere else.

I WAS A TEENAGE ZOMBIE!



MIDWESTERN YOUTH TELLS HOW INFOCOM DEPROGRAMMING BROUGHT HIM BACK FROM A LIVING DEATH.

"IT GOT SO I COULDN'T LET GO," confesses John Carlson of Hickory Falls, Iowa. "My hands were welded to my joystick 24 hours a day. Blisters covered both my thumbs, my wrists ached, my eyes throbbed . . ." It had started as mindless play for young Johnny. But now it was turning his mind to green jelly.

Finally, concerned relatives decided to seek help. Johnny remembers: "I'd passed out after 63 million points—I forget which game. When I came to, I saw a personal computer in my room, with an Infocom game in the disk drive. I just sat there, numb, staring at the words on the screen."

Then—the revelation. "There was like this voice inside the computer, talking to my imagination. Suddenly, I was inside the story. I'd never experienced anything like it—challenging puzzles, realistic people, true dangers. Infocom had plugged into my mind, and shot me into a whole new dimension."

"Sure, I still play video games. But now I know there's more to life than joysticks."

Johnny's folks agree. "We've got our boy back," says Mrs. Carlson, "thanks to Infocom."

We can't save all the Johnnies. But many can still be reached through the remarkable prose of such Infocom games as ZORK,® DEADLINE,™ The WITNESS,™ INFIDEL,™ PLANETFALL,™ and ENCHANTER.™ So please—before it's too late—step up to Infocom. All words. No pictures. The secret regions of your mind are beckoning. A new dimension is in there waiting for you.

(For more information on Infocom games, contact: Infocom, Inc., P.O. Box 855, Garden City, NY 11530.)

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Your next game is just a phone call away

TELEGAMING

By Len Drexler

Imagine combining two popular television commercials: twelve-year-old Bobby misses his grandmother and decides to "reach out and touch her." But he wants to "reach out and zap her," too, so he has *Galaxian* sent over the phone lines into his game console and also into his grandmother's console in her house. After they play a few close games against each other, Bobby's grandmother can be heard exclaiming, "Atari!"

The scene may seem a little strange, but recent developments have made it possible. Both Atari and Coleco have announced plans to deliver their games—with no need for cartridges—overthephoneorcableTVlinesinto your home. Mattel already has a means of letting you play Intellivision games without having to buy cartridges. Control Video Corporation's GameLine and The Games Network will also use the phone and cable lines to bring you games by other top companies. And companies such as CompuServe, The Source, The Delphi System, Telephone Software Connection and NABU all have ways of delivering computer games so that

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT BURGER

BURGE

you never have to go shopping for a floppy disk again.

HOW IT WORKS

It's all part of what's called "teledelivery"—using the wires that already run into your house as delivery routes over which a series of electrical impulses can be sent from central computer banks into a phone modem or cable TV box that connects directly into your game console or home computer. For instance, instead of having to lay out $20 to buy *Ms. Pac-Man,* you can simply subscribe to one of the teledelivery services and punch a few buttons on a special module to "order" the game. The game will be delivered, or "down-loaded," into your console and *Ms. Pac-Man* will appear on your TV screen within seconds. If you decide after a few plays that you're tired of the game, simply stop ordering it over the phone.

Will the teledelivery services make cartridges obsolete? Probably not, because if you want to play one particular game a lot, it will be cheaper to own the cartridge version of it than to keep ordering the game over the phone or cable.

There are also problems in the quality of some teledelivery games. The telephone line is a very simple electrical wire that can only carry limited amounts of information and therefore only games of limited graphic sophistication. In other words, the teledelivered games may not always have the fast action or vibrant colors of arcade or some home games. The cable TV lines can handle a more sophisticated signal and will have no trouble carrying the most imaginative graphics game designers can come up with.

SIXTY PLAYERS AT ONCE

But the teledelivered games are sure to become as important as cartridge games. With many of the teledelivery services, you can have the game downloaded into computers in different locations so you can play against your friend across town or across the country if you like. What's more, some of the teledelivery services make possible the introduction of "multi-player games"—those with *more* than two players. For instance, imagine playing a football game in which each of your friends controls one man on the field. With 11 men on a side, 22 different players could take part. According to a game designer at CBS-Fox Video, that company has conducted experiments in which 50 or 60 players,located in different places all over the U.S., have been able to play a game simultaneously through the use of phone or cable lines.

> **"Imagine playing a game with someone 1000 miles away."**

WHICH ONE?

Choosing a phone or cable-delivered service is a crucial decision. The following rundown should give you the low-down on down-loading.

Of the major game companies—Atari, Coleco and Mattel—two have announced plans for teledelivery and one is actually delivering games now. Last spring, Atari said it was starting a new Ataritel division to produce a combination microprocessor/phone modem module whose purpose would be to receive games and other information sent over phone lines. The module would either have a screen of its own or attach to your TV set. However, there's been no word since as to when it will be for sale. This past fall, Coleco announced that it was teaming up with AT&T to build a similar kind of phone/computer module to receive games and other entertainment over the phone lines.

Teledelivery is one area in which Mattel has left the others in the dust. For several years now it has been delivering Intellivision games over a cable TV channel called PlayCable—available through about 20 local cabled systems, most of which are located in the northeastern U.S. If PlayCable is available on your cable TV system, you can subscribe for $10 to $12 per month. What you'll get when you turn on the channel is a menu of 20 game choices to be played with (and *only* with) an Intellivision game console. You indicate with your keypad which game you'd like and that game will be delivered over the cable into your Intellivision console and will appear on your screen in less than a minute. You can play each of the games as many times as you want.

That menu changes each month as new games are added and less popular ones drop out. Among the game choices in September, for instance, were *Burgertime, Astrosmash, Baseball, Buzz Bombers, Night Stalker, Sea Battle* and *Space Armada.*

Soon to compete with PlayCable for cable-teledelivery bragging rights is The Games Network, just starting up in Orange County, California, by January and soon to be introduced in other areas around the country. Unlike PlayCable or the Coleco plan, you won't need to already own a video game system, but you'll have to rent a Games Network gamebox and keyboard from your cable TV system operator for a $20 deposit. The Games Network people claim that the gamebox has the sophistication of a 64K RAM microcomputer so that their games' graphics are better than any ordinary cartridge game system. For $14.95 a month, The Games Network subscriber will have a choice of 20 games, most of which the company is licensing from other video game makers.

Because most game fans own an Atari VCS or VCS-compatible game console, the GameLine (from Control Video Corporation) may be the most important teledelivery service in operation now. By purchasing a Master Module (a special phone modem for GameLine available in many game stores for $60) and paying a $5 membership fee, you can begin receiving games for a $1 fee (payable by credit card) each time you use the service. By plugging the master Module into the slot on the VCS console for the cartridge, you will be instantly "calling" the CVC central computer. With the menu of about 50 games that you will have already received from the service, you can choose a game by pressing a number on the module. It will be delivered to the memory chip of your Master Module so that you can play the game not once, but five to seven times for your $1 payment. By the way, once the program information has been downloaded into the Master Module (30 to 60 seconds) your phone line is free again.

Among the games on the GameLine menu recently were *Airlock, Demon Attack, Worm War I, M*A*S*H, China Syndrome, Megaforce* and *Shark Attack.* The menu changes each month when new games are added. So far, of the major video game makers, only Imagic has agreed to allow its games to be used on GameLine.

COMPUSERVE, THE SOURCE

Speaking of computers, there are several information services that offer games over the phone lines to your home computer via modem. The games they offer

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52

SERIOUS SOFTWARE
NEW APPLICATIONS FOR YOUR HOME COMPUTER

BECOME A HIGH-TECH HYPNOTIST

By Shay Addams

The Hypnotist

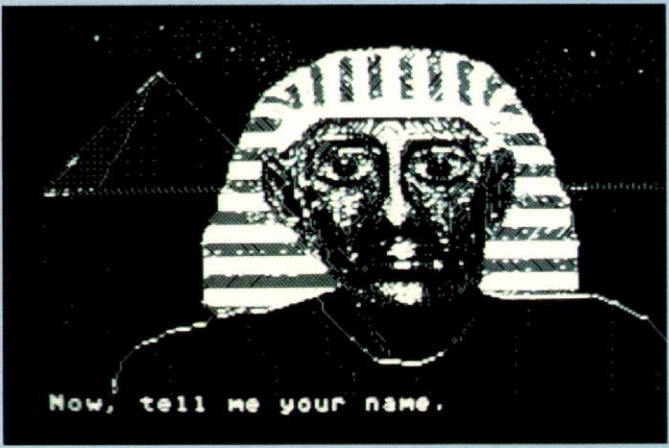
Want to jack up your score at *M.A.C.H. III*? Maybe this program will help, by putting you in a semi-trance and allowing you to program yourself with positive thoughts about blasting enemy helicopters out of the sky. Of course, *The Hypnotist* can also be used by smokers who want to break the habit, or anyone looking for a way to establish *good* habits. Kurian, an ancient Egyptian priest, appears on-screen and after you hook up the biofeedback device to check your pulse rate, hypnotizes you with the old swinging watch trick. In addition to taking charge of your own behavior modification efforts, you can use other parts of the program to enhance memorization of names, words and even whole speeches, or experiment with the "regression" feature to travel back to the year 1853.

Psycom Software, for Commodore 64

Aerobics

Jane Fonda, take a hike! Even dedicated health and fitness enthusiasts get tired of working out with the same exercises, in the same order, day in and day out. (That's been a universal complaint about the exercise videotapes.) Now a high-res exercise instructor can put you through your paces from the TV, and you can adjust the speed at which she does those jumping jacks or any of the other 18 exercises on the disk. You can select just those you want to concentrate on, and put together a personalized workout program.

Spinnaker Software, for C-64, Atari, Apple and Adam



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Now, tell me your name.
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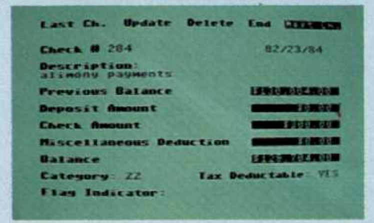

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Last Ch.  Update  Delete  End

Check # 284                    02/23/84
Description:
alimony payments
Previous Balance
Deposit Amount
Check Amount
Miscellaneous Deduction
Balance
Category: 22        Tax Deductable: YES
Flag Indicator:
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Kurian, your mentor in* The Hypnotist*, lulls you into a trance state with soft words and music. (above). At left,* CheckEase*, by T & F Software.

Tax Advantage $59.95

How'd you like to save enough on your federal income tax to buy a batch of new computer games this year? Doing your own taxes instead of paying for professional services is one way to save money, but it's also a sure way to drive yourself right up the wall trying to figure out that incredibly complex 1040. Enter *Tax Advantage*, which vastly simplifies the entry process.

It's all done with menus, which present the 1040 line-by-line onscreen, then wait for you to type in the appropriate data. Name, filing status, wages and so on are keyed in, then you press "F" to go forward and view the next screenful of lines. A small menu at the bottom always reminds you of the options, which include "Enter" data, "I" for itemize a line, and the ability to tap certain keys and move freely about the entire form. Everything is saved to your data disk at regular intervals.

You can jump from one section to any specific line by merely typing in the line number. Schedules A, B, C, D, E, G and SE are part of the program. When you reach a line that calls for filling in a schedule, a prompt asks you to insert the main program disk. That schedule is loaded and filled out the same way; then you reload the 1040 form.

At the end of the road, *Advantage* tells you how much you owe the feds or how much they owe you, and also says which tax bracket you're in. Faster than a speeding laser, it does all the calculations that would otherwise take you days to get wrong yourself—and it does them correctly (though it won't go to court with you like H & R Block will). All that data can be printed out and copied onto your 1040, or you can copy it off the screen as you go if you don't have a printer.

A certain amount of tax planning can be done with this program, because it acts like an electronic spreadsheet and automatically recalculates all the math if you change a number anywhere in the form. This means you can quickly determine the exact effects of dumping an extra $1,000 into your I.R.A. account, or how much your taxes would be cut if you poked out your wife's eyes and claimed her as a blind dependent.

The only drawback is that you have to load the schedules individually, which means that any data changed in one of them must be reentered manually after reloading the 1040 section because it's not in your computer's RAM at the same time.

You say you'd still rather take your taxes to a pro? It's even advantageous for *you* to use this program; this way you can organize your tax data beforehand and have a rough idea of the situation, allowing the accountant to concentrate on money-saving schemes instead of jotting down the numbers you rattle off.

Continental Software, for 48K Atari, Apple II

CheckEase! $34.95

One thing you'll need when filling out that 1040 with the above program is a list of tax-deductible expenses incurred throughout the year. A time-saving way to keep track of such items, if they're paid for by check, is a bonus feature of *CheckEase!*, whose main function is balancing your checkbook.

T & F Software, for Commodore 64 and VIC-20   Disk/Cassette

BECOME A COMPUTER Picasso!

Software and hardware for the artist in the family

By John Holmstrom

Picasso never had a computer, but if he did, he would have realized its potential. In seconds, computers can draw lines of any thickness, produce hundreds of colors and shapes, and create brilliant pieces of artwork that would otherwise take you months to complete. There are quite a few programs on the market that allow you to "draw" on your TV screen, and we have tested eight of them. Who knows—maybe one of these programs will make you the Picasso of the computer age!

FUN WITH ART **$39.95**

Fun With Art is a fine program for doodling, drawing and exploring computer graphics. It's designed with videogamers in mind, since virtually all of the functions are controlled with a joystick. (A trackball delivers finer control with this and similar programs.)

You can draw a picture with any of about 20 functions—including freestyle drawing, straight lines, boxes, circles, outlines and two sizes of text (only one typeface is offered). You can zoom in on portions of the picture for accurate detail, and choose colors to your heart's desire. One of the most interesting functions allows you to transfer blocks of your picture to other parts of the screen, or even to another blank screen. Changing functions in *Fun With Art* is a time-consuming affair, since you have to go back to the menu, pick out the new function, change colors, and/or pick a new width, and finally go back to the picture.

Fun With Art is a good introduction to computer graphics, especially for kids. It's not as useful or accurate as most of the other programs available. It's more like an educational game for kids who are looking for something new to play with their joysticks. It *is* fun, not much else.

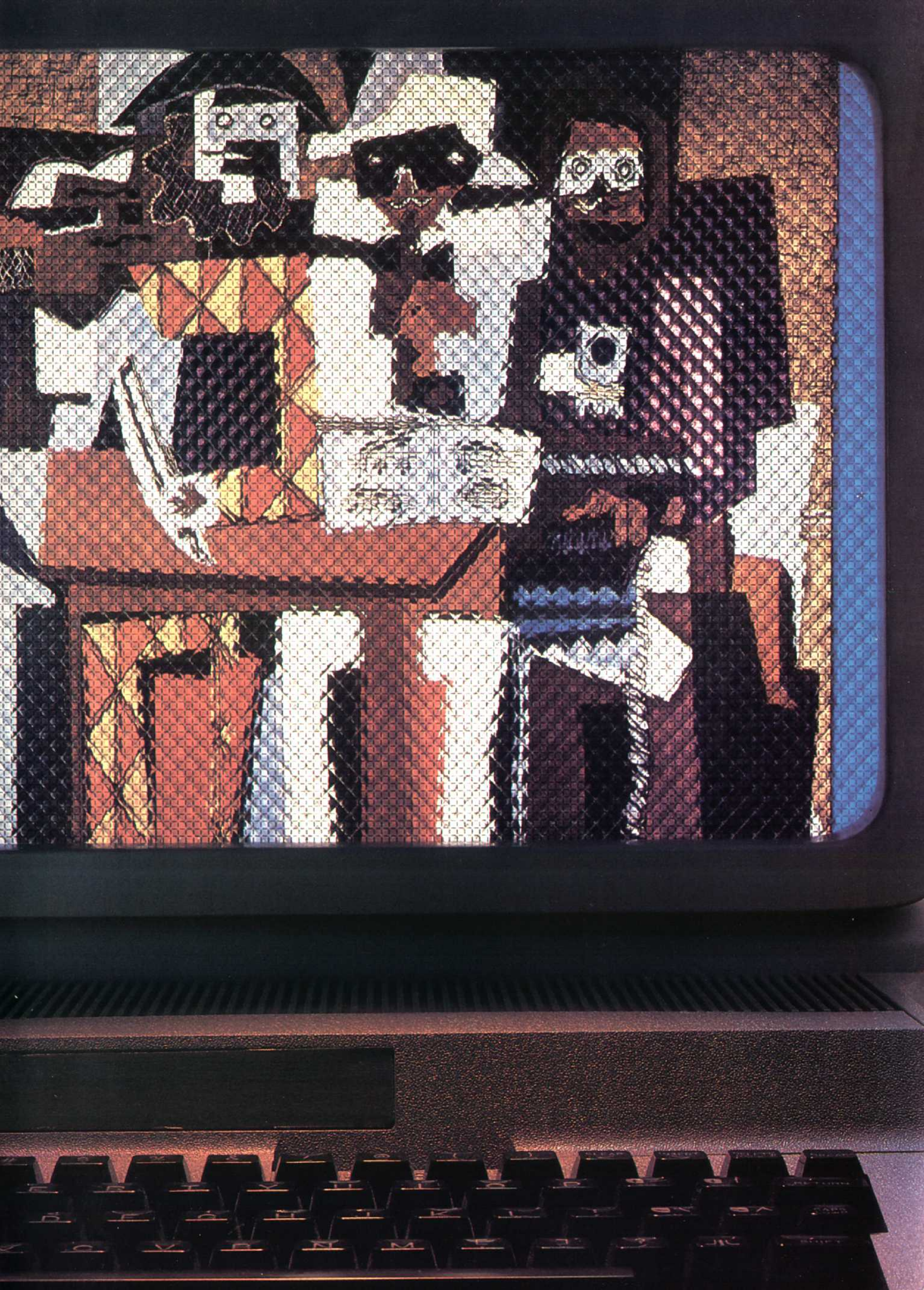
Epyx, for Atari computers

VERSAWRITER **$299.00**

The *VersaWriter* is the best system for tracing original drawings and creating professional charts, graphs and diagrams. It consists of a plastic drawing board with an arm that moves around over the picture area. As you move the arm over a line to be traced or drawn, points are plotted on your TV or monitor (the high resolution mode provides 320 points horizontally and 192 points vertically). The keyboard controls the many functions, so you have to keep one hand on the keys, one eye on the screen, and one of each on the *VersaWriter.*

The graphics functions, many of which are available on most other programs (automatic color fill-in of areas and shapes, plotting lines, erasing and saving

PHOTOGRAPH BY WALTER WICK



pictures) can be executed by pressing a single key on the board. You can erase unwanted details of your drawing simply and easily. You can do very fine shading with the unique "airbrush" function, which adds .01 to 100% values of any color you want.

The "textwriter" was the most impressive and useful mode. *VersaWriter* can display words in three typefaces, or in the Greek alphabet. It also enables you to print your pictures on an Epson MX-80 or MX-100 printer.

VersaWriter has just about everything you'd need in a graphics program. It offers a wide range of colors and very accurate drawing control. In fact, my biggest criticism is that it can do too much. It could take months of work with it before you became familiar with all of it's functions and instructions. Although the reference manual is well written and easy to follow, you need to be able to work the program without it before you can really cook. You also get a program that allows anyone else with an Atari to load and view your art without *VersaWriter.*

Versa Computing (805-498-1956), for Atari with 32K, Apple, IBM PC

GRAPHICS MAGICIAN $59.95

With this program's "Picture System," you can turn out some finely detailed artwork. It accepts input from a joystick or the Apple graphics tablet (I recommend the tablet). All the standard functions—draw, line mode, size of brush stroke (eight choices), and fill are included. The Apple version offers eight line colors and 108 fill choices, and everything you create with this system can be saved to disk.

The *Magician* differs from most art programs, remembering your cursor's movements while you sketch instead of what you actually draw. This means that your pictures can be recreated from disk by the computer much faster, the reason many professional game writers use this program to draw graphic adventures.

But that's only half the picture. The main part of the package is the "Animation System." Move the joystick to easily draw all sorts of objects and make them race around the screen along any path you set up. They can easily be combined with pictures to create your own arcade-style games. (Adding them to your own programs is another story, but the 76-page manual offers tips and examples on how to do this in BASIC and assembly language). Routines for detecting collisions between different objects are even included. Text may also be added.

Penguin's own games and those of many other major manufacturers are developed with *Magician*. It's in the public domain, so you can use it in your own programs intended for sale and not have to pay royalties. You can also copy the disk to make back-ups.

For anyone who wants to create animated art for their own games and who already knows (or is willing to learn) how to program, this is the best software package on the market. If you're solely interested in drawing pictures without animation (or programming know-how), Penguin's *Complete Graphics System* ($79.95) is outstanding, and even enables you to produce simulated 3-D designs. Both are sold on disk only.

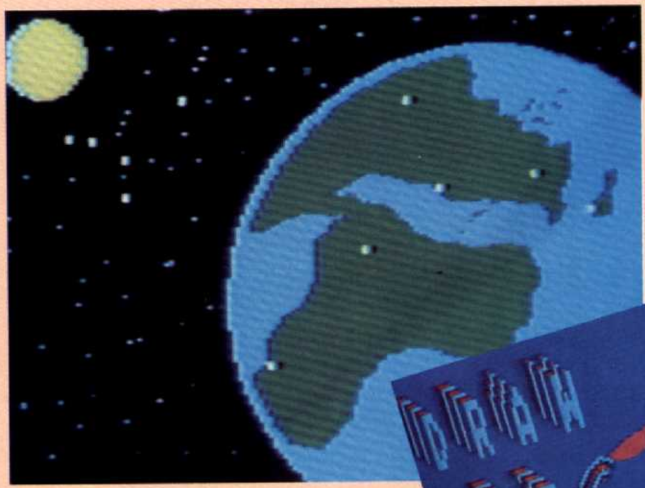
Penguin Software, for Apple, Atari, IBM PC and C-64

DRAWIT $39.95

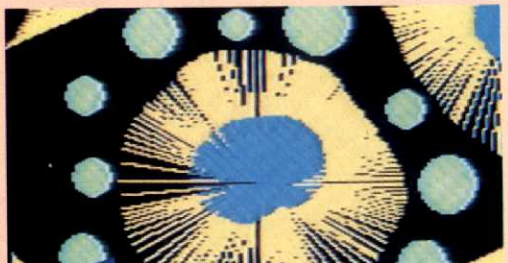
Here's an excellent program for making that impressive business presentation or school project. *Drawit* offers all of the most important drawing functions, a versatile text mode, and an animate mode that can fade one screen into another or sweep one chart over another. You can program the boards to do so to music.

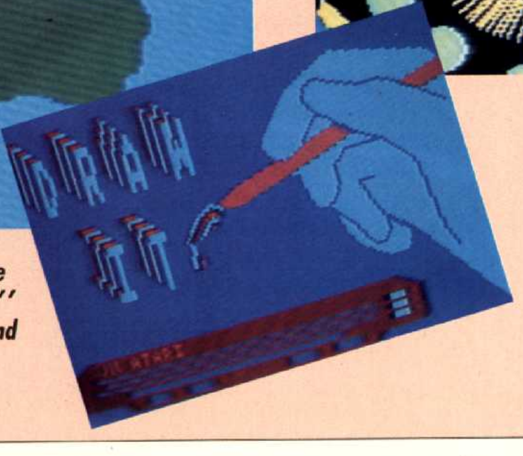
Drawit, like *Fun With Art*, relies on a joystick. Like *VersaWriter*, the keyboard selects drawing commands and color selection. There are the usual line, circle, box and fill-in functions, as well as four color "pens," fast and slow drawing speeds, sixteen colors, eight hues and text size selection. You can move a picture anywhere around the screen, magnify segments at two different ratios, and store up to nine different boards, which are later used in the animate mode.

To take full advantage of the animator, you should have a computer with 48K. The more memory your computer has, the more pages you'll have to work with. For instance, if yours has 16K, there *is* no animate mode, since you get only one page to work with.



Koalapad's "circle" function drew the shapes of the earth and moon, "draw" added the outlines of the continents, and the colors were done with "fill."





Above: These psychedelic patterns were created with Koala's unique "fan" feature. It radiates streaked lines of color outward from any point you select. Left: Drawit offers all the standard sketching and painting functions, and also has a versatile text mode. It's biggest plus is the animator mode.

Drawit reminded me of a scaled-down *VersaWriter* with no drawing board, less color selection, and no way to transfer the screens to a printer. A unique BASIC listing is provided that enables you to incorporate your drawings into programs you write on your own. *Drawit* is sold on cassette as well as disk.

Atari Program Exchange (408-727-2553), for all Atari computers

THE KOALAPAD $99.95

The KoalaPad Touch Tablet is the simplest, easiest-to-use hardware I've seen for drawing with home computers. It's a small white box with a black drawing pad and two buttons on top. Made of sturdy plastic, it feels very comfortable to work with. You can draw with your fingers or the plastic stylus that comes with it.

With the Atari, Apple and IBM versions, you get a disk-based program, *Micro Illustrator.* After you plug the pad into your controller port and boot the disk, a menu appears. It offers 15 commands, your choice of "brush" sizes and a color set. Sliding the stylus across the pad moves an arrow to your selection, then you hit a button and you can draw freehand, instantly create boxes, circles, discs and frames, execute a "fan" function and fill areas with color.

The *Micro Illustrator* offers those standard functions and a few you won't find anywhere else. The "mirror" command causes the line you draw to be reproduced on three other parts of the screen, creating ornate, geometric patterns that are pretty to look at and idiotically easy to draw. The color menu has a "rainbow" effect included that can change a color into a psychedelic, undulating color bar. The brush mode has a variety of "pen and brush" sizes. The color menu offers 255 hues and is easy to use. You can load and save pictures for later.

The instructions are easy to read, simple to understand, and will catapult you into the fast and fun way to do computer graphics. More individual expression can be achieved with the Koala system, and it's an excellent program for children of any age.

The drawback is that there is no text function, so the Koala is not useful for charts or graphs. There is no way to transfer your work to a printer, and no animate mode. It *does* format disks, which comes in very handy.

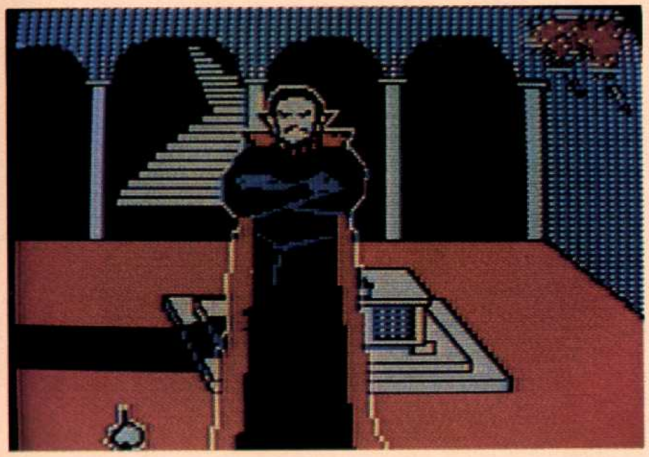
Commodore 64 users get a program called *KPaint*, which has all the same features and more. You can copy part of a picture and move it elsewhere on the screen. You can use "swap," which allows you to switch back and forth between paintings on two screens.

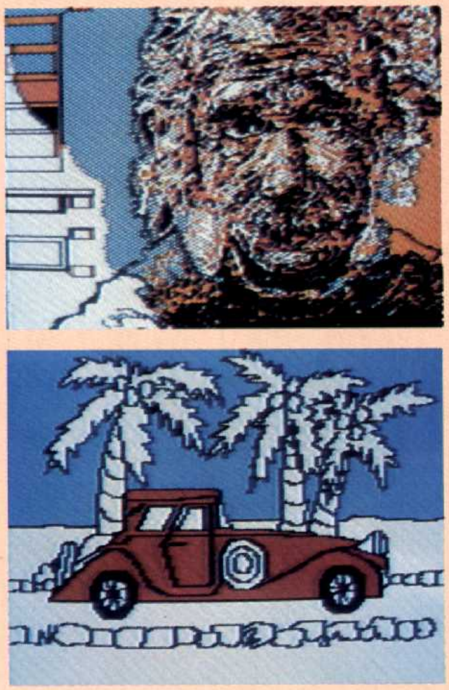
You can also move a line, circle or other creation right after sketching it, enabling you to draw something and fit it perfectly into place. "Zoom" is enhanced: unlike all the others, *KPaint*'s zoom splits the screen to show the enlarged area at the bottom and the original size and your detailed touches at the top. Best of all is "Oops," which erases your last line or fill without disturbing the rest of the picture. You don't get as many colors with the 64, but the software's more powerful.

The KoalaPad was my personal favorite. You don't have to know anything about computers—it's very easy to figure out. It can do more than the others simply because it's easier to operate, so you won't have to spend a lot of time reading lengthy instruction manuals.

Koala Technologies, for Apple, Atari, IBM PC, C-64 and VIC

The "Picture System" part of **Graphics Magician** *breathed life into Dracula for Penguin's adventure game,* **Transylvania**. *And its "Animation System" can create the kinds of characters and space ships you see flying around in commercial computer games like* **Minit Man**.





Micropainter's *palette is to Einstein's left. These are two of the pictures provided on the program disk, allowing you to use* **Micropainter** *like a video coloring book. But you can also sketch and paint with it freehand.*

MICROPAINTER $34.95

Micropainter is a video coloring book, mostly for children 7-13. The instruction book is even laid out and printed like a coloring book, and includes crayons so kids can color.

In spite of this, or because of it, the instructions are very hard to figure out. There's a quick reference chart that helps you cut through all the unnecessary gobbledygook in the coloring book, which confuses rather than instructs. You can fill in colors, draw lines, draw straight lines, choose color complements, and magnify parts of the picture—which any graphics program worth buying can do.

Micropainter does have a few predrawn pictures that you can paint-by-numbers, so to speak. For people who don't want to draw, but want to fool around with some pre-fabricated art, this is the one. Coloring books sell for a good reason.

Datasoft, for Apple and all Atari computers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52

CAN YOU SURVIVE? KRULL

Most arcade games are straightforward—the players with the quickest hands and the quickest minds achieve the highest scores. But sometimes a game will have a hidden trick in the program that will allow *anyone* to rack up big points—*if* they know the trick. Here is a situation that involves one of these devices. Would *you* be able to use it?

THE CRISIS:

On the first board, you have become trapped by a wall of rolling boulders. Three directions are completely blocked off, and it looks like the only thing to do is to go down. What should you do?

THE SOLUTION:

Go down, of course! But did you know that as you run with a boulder on your tail, your score *rolls*? Try getting *almost* run over. By running up and down the screen three or four times, you can add up to 5,000 points to your score.

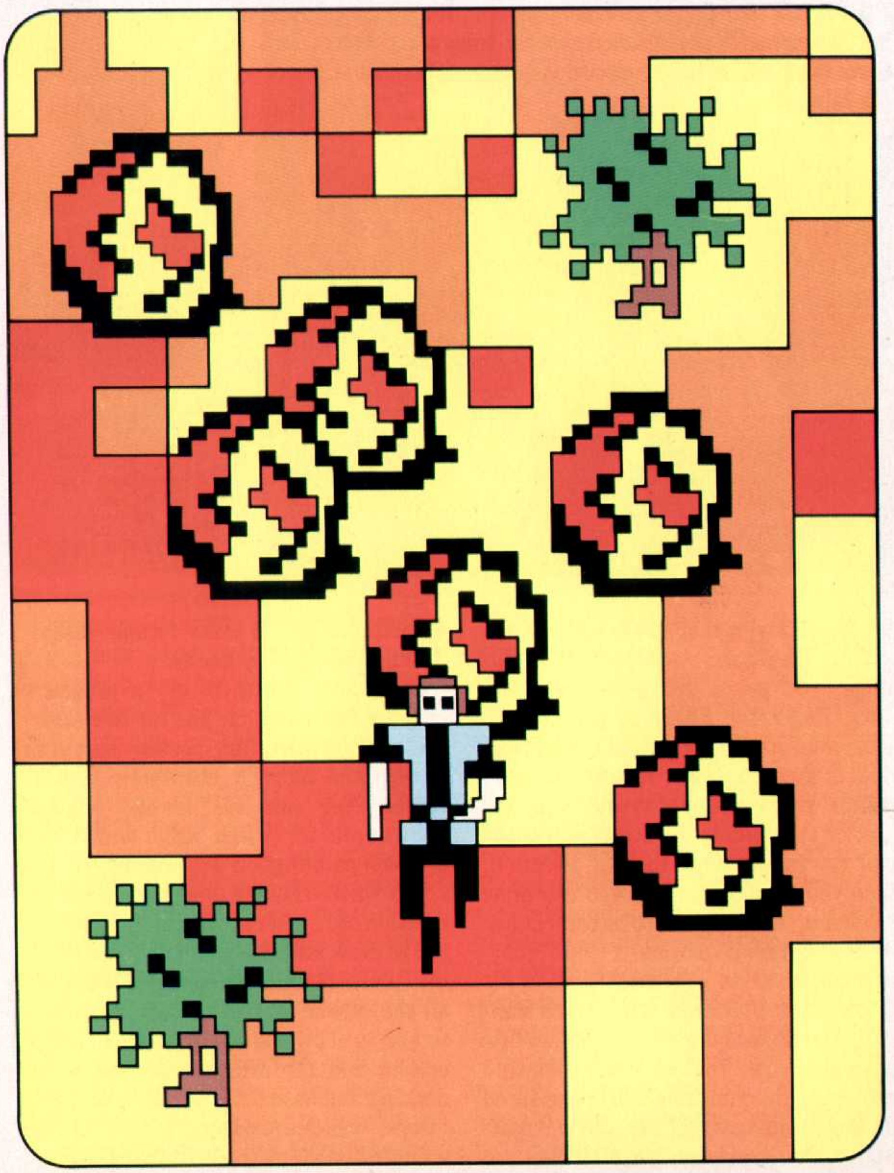
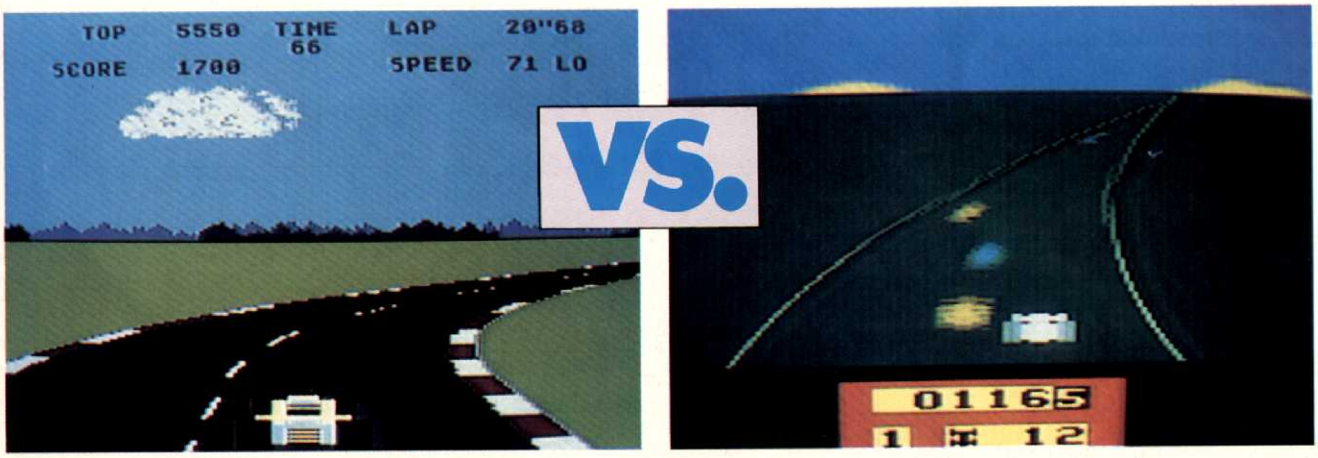


ILLUSTRATION BY NINA WALLACE

Waldo the maintenance man Clue #3

WHICH ONE'S THE WINNER?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BEAT IT!

M.A.C.H. 3

By Bob Guerra

Dragon's Lair, the first laserdisc videogame to see widespread distribution, allowed the player to make choices at specific points during the animated adventures of Dirk the Daring. These choices either helped Dirk in his quest to rescue Princess Daphne from the clutches of the Evil Dragon, or resulted in the loss of a game life.

With *M.A.C.H. 3,* Mylstar has introduced a whole new type of laserdisc game. As the Military Air Command Hunter, you have continuous control over a computer-generated fighter plane or bomber. In both cases, the laserdisc provides a breathtaking background of hills, waterways and canyons as you annihilate enemy aircraft and installations. Best of all, the scenery is composed of actual filmed footage, not some animator's or programmer's ideas of what the earth should look like from 3000 feet up.

Although *M.A.C.H. 3* employs the latest videodisc technology to create a realistic sensation of flight, both the bomber and fighter pilot simulations are straightforward target-shooting games with a common strategy: destroy the enemy while avoiding your own destruction. No matter which mission you decide to take, you will begin with three to five planes. Bonus planes are awarded for every 40,000 or 50,000 points. The settings you find at your local arcade will depend on what the owner has determined will maximize his profit.

> **"After you pass the white radar dish, move to the middle for one target, and then to the right-center to hit several more"**

You control the plane with a large, pistol-grip joystick that features a trigger for firing your front-mounted gun, as well as buttons beneath your thumb that either release bombs or fire missiles (depending on the scenario you've chosen). To complicate matters, Mylstar has also provided side-mounted buttons below the joystick to perform the same functions. The most effective way to use your weapons, however, is to use the trigger for your front-mounted gun, and one of the side buttons for missiles or bombs. Trying to press all the buttons at once will only result in inaccurate firing and sore fingers.

FIGHTER PILOT

The first thing to realize is that you don't actually have to pilot the plane. You can only control its position on the screen, and not the direction in which it flies. In this way, it is similar to Atari's *Star Wars* game, in which R2D2 controls the flight of your X-Wing Fighter.

The second thing to note is that your plane is not fired upon for the first several seconds of the game. Therefore, you should begin by mercilessly attacking each computer-generated target that appears. These are small rectangles with Xs tanks or missile launchers in them . While the Xs only give you 500 points, hitting weapon targets will weaken the enemy's defensive capabilities.

As soon as the game starts, concentrate your fire on the left side of the screen. After you pass the white radar dish, move to the middle for one target, and then to the right-center for several more. Wipe out as many weapons as possible before shooting the Xs. When the screen shifts from rolling hills to a green, swampy location, prepare to dodge enemy missiles as you hear "approaching the first target, Captain" over the plane's radio.

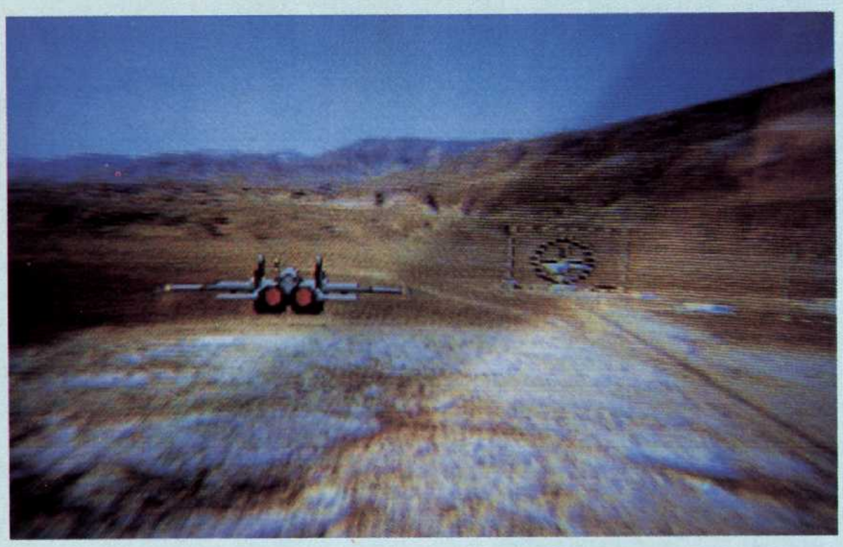
Enemy missiles are difficult to spot at first, but after a few flights, you'll be able to see them a mile away. During the early going it's a simple matter to dodge each missile with some evasive flying, but as the game progresses they become virtually impossible to avoid and must be shot out of the sky. In most cases, however, they will fly directly into your line of fire.

Once you make it safely by the missile base, you will be whisked off to the clouds to battle a missile-firing helicopter. When the chopper appears, quickly line it up and blast away. They're worth 1,000 points apiece.

Your next major target will be the bridge. You'll have to shoot down or avoid several missiles, but the many that appear on the right side of the bridge will boost your score considerably. Shift your plane over to left center as you cross the bridge, and try for the last three targets.

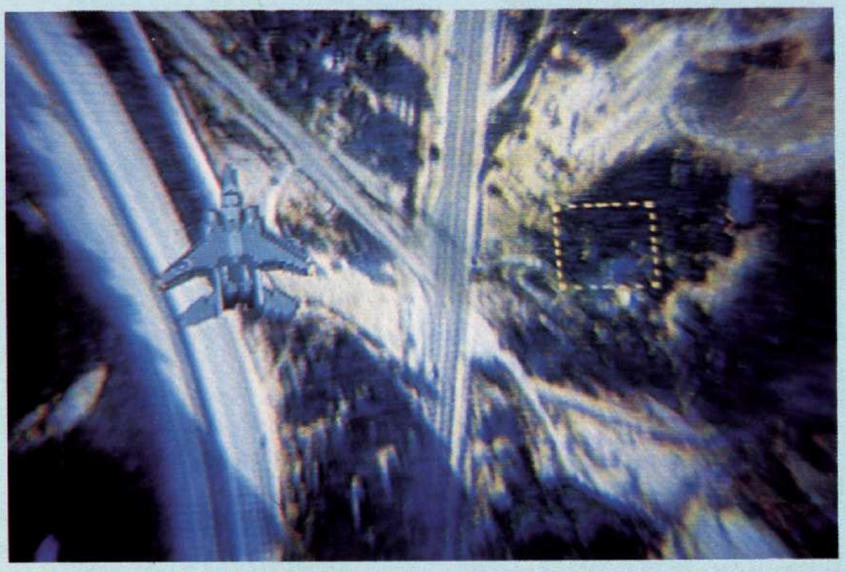
It is at this point that the action really starts to heat up. As you find yourself gliding through a rocky canyon, prepare to face up to three heavily-armed helicopters simultaneously. Each is more dangerous than the first one you encountered in the clouds. Since the first copter usually enters from the top left, a little advance planning and positioning will help.

From this point on, you should worry most about surviving each barrage of missiles that is sent to greet you. Also, since you can only launch up to four missiles at one time, fire only when there's something to hit. Don't take a lot of time to line up each target. Move continuously around the screen, spraying targets with gunfire and missiles as you pass over them.



M.A.C.H. 3
MILITARY AIR COMMAND HUNTER

M.A.C.H. 3 is the first photographic-quality laser game. While games like Dragon's Lair and Cliff Hanger have you use the joystick to switch from one animated cartoon to another, M.A.C.H. 3 superimposes a computer graphic plane over a smooth motion picture. The dotted line boxes indicate your targets. The game is also innovative in that you have the choice of playing either the fighter pilot version (above) or the bomber pilot mission (right). Both offer high-quality graphics, challenging game play, and a real "you are there" feeling.



BOMBS AWAY

The key to success as a bomber is the ability to recognize and avoid flak bursts from the ground. These appear as dark circles that grow as they approach your plane, then suddenly explode.

To avoid flak bursts, move your plane to the side of the screen when you're not dropping bombs. Your plane is never safe behind a flak burst, only beside it. It's better to lose your chance to destroy some valuable ground target than to take a chance at losing one of your bombers to stray flak bursts.

The first area to bomb is a short airstrip with several stationary planes. Again, the actual targets will appear as clearly marked rectangles. Don't sit directly over the line of planes as you unload your bombs, but rather drop several at a time as you pass over the targets from side to side.

As you cruise along during this early part of the game, use only the bomb button, and keep your plane low on the screen. After you head out to sea, move up to the top of the screen to avoid getting hit from behind by the slow-moving cruise missiles that enter from the bottom.

When you begin to approach land again, concentrate on firing your front-mounted gun. Large enemy aircraft will begin to attack from the front, but can be shot down if you pay close attention to the built-in radar system.

A small, blue, plane indicator will appear at the top of the screen, in the exact location that the larger fighter plane will enter the playfield. Simply line up your bomber with the indicator plane and fire away. Continue dropping bombs as well, however, to destroy any ground targets you happen to be passing over.

MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL:
50,000 (FIGHTER)
30,000 (BOMBER)

BEAT IT!

CHAMPION BASEBALL

Anyone who remembers playing the old electro-mechanical baseball games of yesteryear must appreciate the realistic action and big league play options of *Champion Baseball*. While the baseball games of the pre-video era allowed you to swing a miniature wooden bat for singles, doubles, triples and homers, Sega's simulation includes everything you expect from a day at the ballpark except the hot dogs and beer.

Double plays, ground rule doubles, pinch hitting, relief pitching, base stealing and a voice-synthesized umpire are just some of the exciting features. You even get to choose your own team. Before selecting Los Angeles, Montreal, Boston or any of the others, you get to study each player's batting average as well as the earned run averages of the pitching staff. Since each player's performance depends mostly on your ability to manage the team, don't worry too much about your selection. Just try to choose a team that has a good balance between consistent hitters (high batting averages) and effective relievers (low ERAs).

PLAY BALL!

The action is controlled with a joystick and three buttons labeled A, B and C. "A" allows you to send in a pinch hitter, or a relief pitcher if you are playing the field. When a player comes to bat, you're given a short time to study his average and make a decision. Once the first pitch is thrown, this option is forfeited. Since the roster contains a limited number of substitutes, use them sparingly.

Button B performs several functions both offensively and defensively. With it you swing the bat and instruct runners to try for extra bases while on offense, and pitch the ball while playing the field. Once the ball is hit, B is used to throw the ball in from the outfield. It is also used to register your choice of teams and subs.

The third button, C, is used to steal bases and to instruct a runner to return to base if you decide he won't make it to the next one. For example, you hit the ball deep to left. You get to first and the left fielder is chasing it. You tap B so the runner will proceed to second. As you round second, the left fielder picks up the ball and throws to third base. Instead of running into a sure tag-out at third, hit C to get back to second.

The joystick is also used to position both batter and pitcher, to decide which base is to receive the throw from the outfield, and in conjunction with B to determine which base runners will advance to the next base.

> **"Swing only at over-the-plate pitches that you can hit near the *end* of the bat. Time your swings to pull the hit to specific areas of the field."**

BATTER UP!

When the game begins, the computer-controlled players will be in the field. By moving the joystick from side to side, you can control your batter's stance. Swing only at pitches that are over the plate and that you'll be able to hit near the *end* of the bat. You'll seldom get a hit by swinging at an inside pitch unless you move the batter away from the plate before swinging. By controlling the timing of your swing, you'll be able to "pull" your hits to specific areas of the field. By swinging slightly late, you'll send the ball to the opposite field, and by swinging early, the ball will head to the same side as the batter hits from.

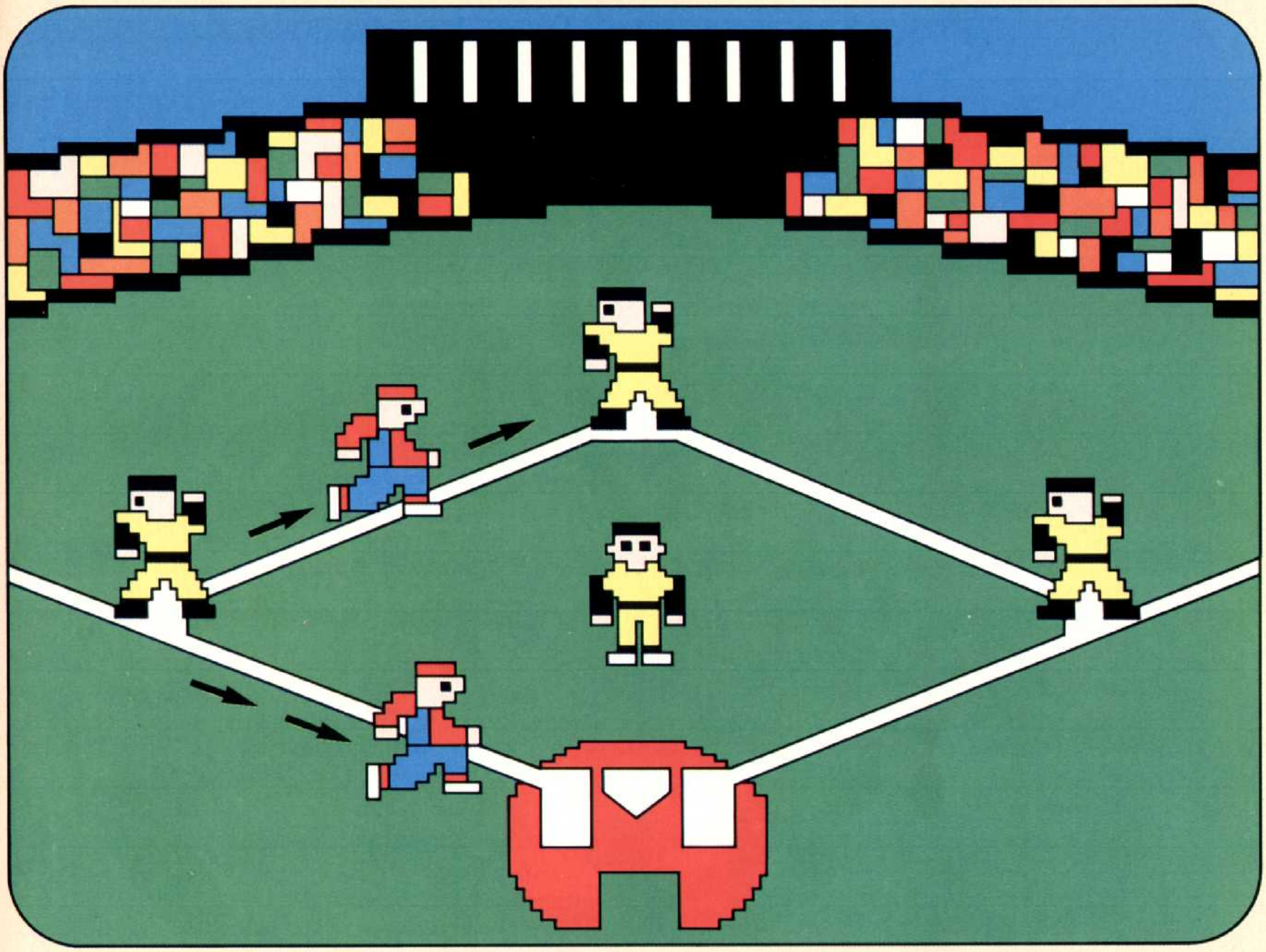
When the ball is hit, the player automatically runs to first base. Then, if you feel like trying for second, tap B as he rounds first. Unless you're sure you can make it, though, it's best to take the single. Likewise, stealing second or third is a risky tactic that is difficult to execute. The best policy is to play it safe.

If there's a man on second and the batter finds a hole for a base hit, both runners automatically advance to the next base. You must then use the joystick with B to choose which runner will try for extra bases first. Make the lead runner head for home by moving the joystick to the left and tapping B, then advance the new base runner to second by moving the joystick to the right and hitting B again. Also, when you want a runner to return to the previous base, be sure the joystick is positioned to control the correct man.

Don't send in a pinch hitter unless the batter's average is in the low .200s. One exception to this rule may be if there are two outs and the bases are full. Here you may want to substitute a .300 hitter for a .257 hitter, just to pick up another run or two before the third out. Remember, even a slugger with a .329 batting average won't guarantee a hit unless you control him correctly. Finally, don't swing at every pitch. Many new players find themselves swinging at pitches that are a mile outside. WAIT FOR YOUR PITCH!

CHANGE SIDES

Unlike real baseball, which lasts nine innings, *Champion Baseball* is over as soon as the computer-controlled team takes a lead. You'll want to go into the bottom of the first with a substantial lead of your own. Your job upon taking the field will be to protect that lead through skillful pitching and shrewd fielding.



Make the lead runner head home by moving the stick left and tapping B. Advance the new runner to second by moving the joystick right and hitting B again. If you want to return to second, position the stick to control the right man.

Pitching the ball straight over the plate, especially to a batter with a high average, is like begging for him to slug one out of the park. Instead, position your pitcher at one side of the mound and use the joystick to curve the ball into or away from the plate. By throwing from the side closest to the batter and then curving the ball out to just catch an outside corner, you can often cause the batter to fan.

If the batter hits the ball, you will have no control over your fielders' reactions until the ball is either caught or scooped up. If you pick up a ground ball or one that drops into a hole, you must use the joystick to choose which base the ball will be thrown to. Push the stick to the left for first, straight back for second, to the right for third and straight ahead for home plate. You will also have to push B to make the throw.

When there is a man on first or second, keep in mind the possibility of a steal. As soon as the pitch is thrown, the batter may disappear, indicating that a base runner is trying to steal. Immediately pull the joystick in the direction of the base the runner is heading toward and start tapping B like crazy. This will ensure that the catcher fires the ball to the proper base as soon as possible.

There are two types of double plays you'll want to try. The first type involves scooping up a ground ball, picking off the lead runner and then throwing the ball to first to get the hitter. Since any hit with a man on first will result in a force play at second, you don't have to tag the runner before throwing to first.

The second double play happens when an outfielder catches a fly ball and then throws to the base before a runner returns. Set up to throw long before the fielder actually gets the ball. Then tap B repeatedly so the fielder will unload the ball as quickly as possible.

Like real pitchers, your video pitcher will get tired around the third or fourth inning. It's time to go to the bull pen for some relief. Hit button A, and then use the joystick to select one of three relievers. Remember, the lower the ERA, the better the pitcher.

Like most video games, it's just about impossible to win at *Champion Baseball*. You will, however, be able to enjoy four or five innings of some real major league action. And unless the roof at your local arcade leaks, you'll never have a game rained out.

**MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL:
12,000**

ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP ANDERSON

THE CLONES OF Q*BERT

Ripoffs or right on? Everybody wants a piece of the pyramid

By Dan Gutman

Pong begat *Super Pong* and *Space Invaders* begat *Space Invaders Deluxe. Donkey Kong* gave birth to *Donkey Kong Junior,* which was quickly followed by *Mario Bros.* and *Donkey Kong 3. Pac-Man* has so many relatives that we've lost count, not to mention *Mousetrap, LadyBug* and a slew of similar eating-around-the-maze games.

It's a fact of life—anything phenomenally successful will instantly be followed by something very similar. A lot of these spin-offs are just ripoffs—deliberate attempts to take someone else's idea and cash in on it. This is illegal, and computer games are protected by copyright laws just as books are. But not all spin-offs are ripoffs. Some borrow the original idea and take it further—change it, turn it around, perhaps even improve on it.

One of last year's biggest arcade games was *Q*Bert,* and at last count it had spawned no less than 11 similar games. Some of them are inspired by *Q*Bert* and some are obvious imitations. But there is one name for all of them—The Clones of Q*Bert.

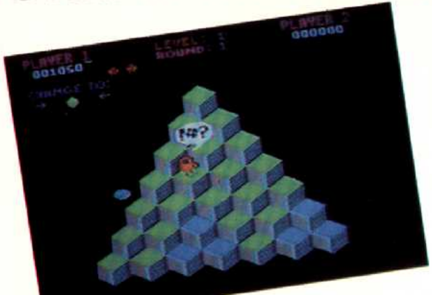
Although *Q*Bert* itself borrowed some of the cuteness and strategy of *Pac-Man,* the game is an original. You control an odd but adorable character who hops about a pyramid of cubes, chased by other unusual creatures. Some of them can kill you, some travel sideways, one will freeze everything on the screen, and one turns into a snake. The innovative thing about the game is that to advance to the next board, you don't kill anything or eat anything—you merely have to jump on each cube and change its color to a certain target color. This is the theme that runs through all the clones.

MR. COOL

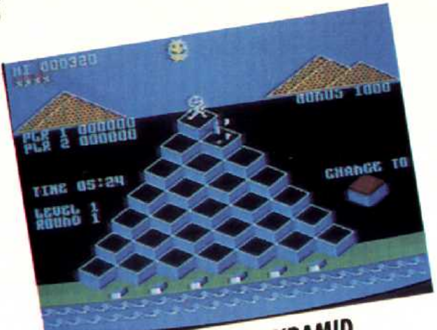
Mr. Cool is supposed to be an ice cube, but he looks more like a TV set with legs. He hops not on cubes, but on 28 colored platforms suspended in space in the shape of a pyramid. Like Q*Bert, Mr. Cool has personality—he jumps up and down gleefully after coloring all the platforms.

While Q*Bert's enemies hopped over

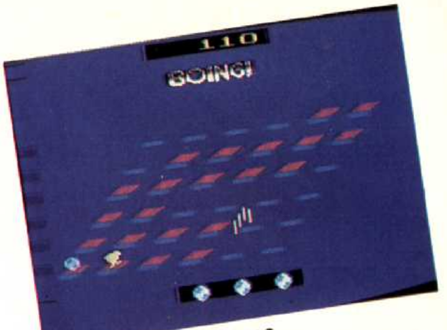
Send in the Clones



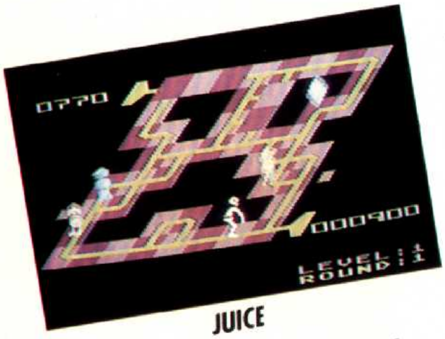
Q*BERT



PHAROAH'S PYRAMID



BOING



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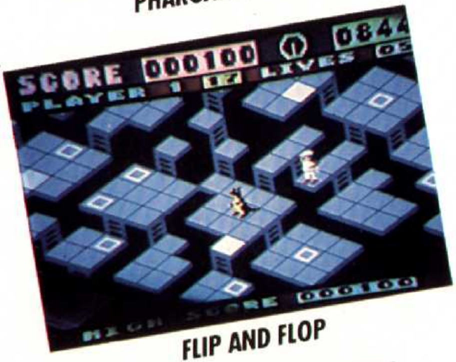
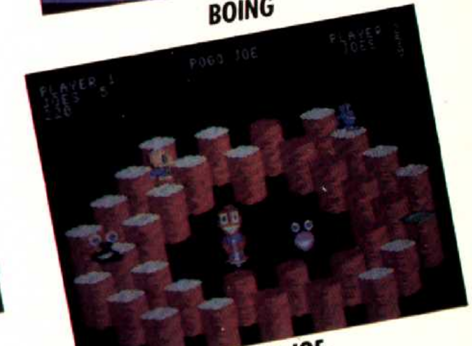


FLIP AND FLOP



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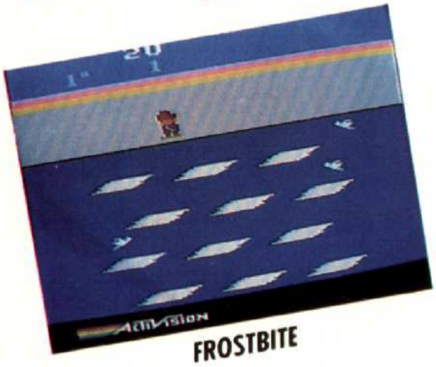
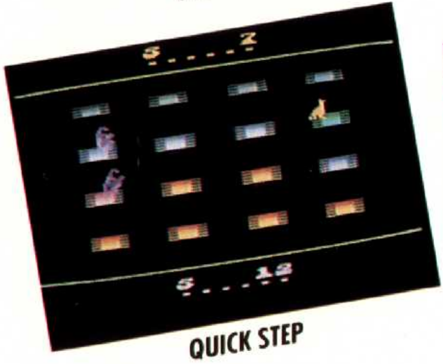
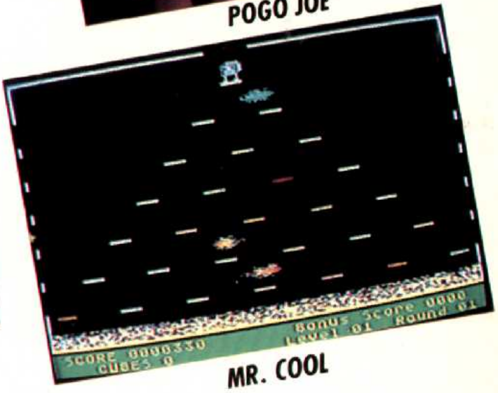


FROSTBITE



QUICK STEP



MR. COOL

the top of the pyramid and chased down after him, Mr. Cool's adversaries mainly shoot out the sides of the screen at varying speeds. As an ice cube, you've got fireballs and hot springs (which look and act suspciously like Coily) trying to melt you. You can turn the tables on them once per round by hitting the fire button to get "Super Cool Time"—the fireballs turn to snowballs and the springs lose their heat. Super Cool Time is equivalent to Q*Bert touching his magic green ball, which freezes the action temporarily.

Since the fireballs shoot out the sides, the lower corners of the pyramid are most dangerous, and this dictates your strategy in the game. It is especially hazardous when you've got to change colors twice, which occurs on random platforms, not the entire screen.

It's beautiful when Mr. Cool melts, but other than that, this game doesn't break new ground. The platforms are thin, so it's hard to see the target color. And you can't jump off the pyramid, which is the funniest part of *Q*Bert*. *Mr. Cool* is addicting in the short run, but quickly becomes tiresome.

Sierra On-Line, for Commodore 64 and Atari computers.

FROSTBITE

While Mr. Cool is afraid of melting, Frostbite Bailey is going to freeze if he can't build an igloo before the temperature drops to zero. This delightful game takes the "hop around and change things" concept and creates an entirely new game.

Frostbite is one of the two clones in which the pyramid—or ice floe, in this case—moves. Floes come out horizontally, sometimes in groups of four, sometimes in long strings of smaller blocks. When you jump on a block, it contributes a brick to your igloo (at the top of the screen) and changes an entire row of ice floes from white to blue. When your igloo is complete, you climb in to advance to the next wave.

There are hazards, of course—polar grizzlies, Alaskan king crabs, snow geese and killer clams. You can also jump into the icy waters. There are no flying discs or emergency escape valves, but you can eat fish for bonus points and reverse the direction of the ice floe by hitting your fire button. And unlike all the other clones (and *Q*Bert* itself), *Frostbite* allows you to slightly change the direction of your hop in mid-air.

Frostbite shows how you can take an idea and use it creatively without ripping off the original game.

Activision, for Atari VCS

Q-BOPPER

On the other hand, *Q-Bopper* is almost an identical copy of *Q*Bert*, right down to the name. Your first impression of *Q-Bopper* will be, "It's a ripoff, but it's a *good* ripoff." The action and animation are very good, maybe better than in *Q* Bert* itself. But you quickly notice that a lot has been left out—your only enemies are colored spheres, the "flying discs" don't fly, there is nothing to look forward to but more balls and more color changes.

The only interesting difference in *Q-Bopper* is the pyramid shape. It's not a perfect pyramid—there are a couple of extra cubes dangling off the bottom. The game is a very good surface imitation, but there was no reason to make it other than to cash in on a popular game.

Accelerated Software, for Commodore 64.

JUICE

This is the most visually spectacular of the clones, and one that will drive you insane. You are Edison, a kinetic android, and a good-looking one at that. On a tilted rectangular plane, you've got to complete the electrical connection of a circuit board by hopping on every section.

While most of the other clones move faster than *Q*Bert* and are essentially eye-hand games, *Juice* is slow. Fans of strategy games and pattern games will prefer it.

There is a lot to deal with: blue diamonds that pop up and chase you (Coily?), lightning bolts that change the color of the cubes, a smiling face (*Berzerk*'s Evil Otto?) that leaps out on level three to thankfully freeze the action. There are no flying discs, but there are platforms on the sides that will make you disappear and materialize on the opposite side.

In the higher levels of the game, every hop will change the color of a cube, even after it has reached its target color. This is maddening. Fortunately, we are allowed to select to play these levels even if we can't reach them on our own—a feature missing in most of the other clones.

Even though *Juice* contains most of the general elements of *Q*Bert*, it has disguised them so completely and so well that it is an excellent game in itself. *Juice* is to *Q*Bert* what *West Side Story* was to *Romeo and Juliet*.

Tronix, for Commodore 64 and Atari computers.

QUICK STEP

Juice is a slow game, but *Quick Step* is the fastest of the lot. That doesn't necessarily make it good, however.

As in *Frostbite*, the blocks move, this time vertically. When they scroll off the bottom of the screen, you (a kangaroo) earn points if they are *your* color. Your only enemy is a squirrel, who is also jumping around changing the color of the blocks. There are no flying discs, weird characters or fancy graphics.

> **"Juice is to *Q*Bert* what *West Side Story* was to *Romeo & Juliet*."**

They attempted to make up for the simplicity with sound and color. The game sounds like Activision's *Dolphin*, with assorted beeps and tones, and each one has a meaning. Certain colored blocks also provide information, such as the "magic mat," which freezes the squirrel.

As a one-player game, *Quick Step* is excruciatingly dull and frustrating. The two-player version can be a lot of fun, though, because each player controls one of the animals. *Quick Step* is the only clone (and one of the few computer games) that will put two players on the screen at the same time.

Imagic, for Atari VCS

FLIP & FLOP

First Star also has a computer *Q*Bert* clone, with a little *Crystal Castles* thrown in for good measure. Once again you're a kangaroo, and this time your enemy is a zookeeper. This game features lively music, intermissions and graphics as good as *Juice*.

Flip & Flop has several innovations. For one thing, some of the blocks have fly paper over them, which will make a sticky situation for anyone who lands on them. For another, on alternating waves the entire screen turns upside down! You've got to play the game in a completely different manner. Once again, when game designers take one good idea and add their own creativity to it, they come up with clever new games and further the evolution of computer games.

First Star, for Commodore 64 and Atari computers

PHAROAH'S PYRAMID

Sometimes they try too hard. The best part of *Pharoah's Pyramid* is the plot. It seems that Ramses, ruler of Egypt, was unable to finish his pyramid because Moses carried off his workers and drowned his armies. Whoever completes this pyramid will attain gold, diamonds, jewels, and control of all Egypt. But you've got to fight off snakes, alligators, insane people and five plagues (flies, frogs, locusts, hail and fire, and the Angel of Death). With each level, you advance from slave to Pharoah of Egypt.

Great story. Clever use of *Q*Bert*'s pyramid. And the screen is very crisp and colorful. There's only one problem with this game—it's unplayable. Joystick control is very sticky, and once you get going, your character moves so fast that you fall off the pyramid.

It's a shame, because the premise of the game is so interesting. With most computer games, the premise is "fire and run until you get killed." Even *Q*Bert* isn't much more involved than that. *Pharoah's Pyramid* showed a lot of promise. It's too bad they didn't play-test it and work out the bugs.

Master Control Software, for Atari computers

POGO JOE

This is the coolest of the clones. The designers gave unusual names to each of the 64 waves, such as "Cheese Food" and "Tennis, Antibody." Some of these are inside jokes that only fans of the Beatles ("Here's Another Clue For You All") or *Get Smart* ("Not The Craw, The Craw!") will understand. Some are inside jokes *nobody* will understand. In any case, it's fun to advance through the waves, just to see what the next one will be called.

Like all the other clone characters, Pogo Joe has to hop on various surfaces to change their color. This time you're hopping on tops of cylinders, and you're being chased by weird-looking enemies reminiscent of the Blue Meanies in *Yellow Submarine*. The configuration of the cylinders is different in each wave, and some of them can be used to your advantage—black ones transport you across the screen and green ones "smart bomb" all your enemies into extinction. These enemies don't just hop like statues—they actually *turn* in mid-air.

The game has it all. It's cute but strategic, with excellent graphics and bouncy music. By varying the speed of the characters, you can change it from a pattern game to a frenetic eye-hand experience. *Pogo Joe* would not exist if not for *Q*Bert*, but we can be thankful for both of them.

Screenplay, for Commodore 64 and Atari computers.

TELEGAMING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

are much less complex than any we've mentioned up to this point—most of them, in fact, are text games that may have stick-figures in them, but have little or no color. Some game fans will scoff at the simplicity of these games. Others will savor the services because of their multi-player game capability.

Three-year-old CompuServe is the best-known computer information service and offers about 35 games to its subscribers. The most popular are *Megawars, Star Trek* and *Casino*—three multi-player games where the number of players who can play at once is unlimited. (*Megawars,* incidentally *does* have color graphics.) Most of CompuServe's other games are of the text variety—*Hangman, Chess, Bridge,* etc. To receive the service, there's an initial membership fee of $20. It then costs $6 per hour on weekends and evenings and $12 per hour during business hours to use the service.

The other major computer information is The Source, which has 80 to 90 games like *Adventure, Black Dragon, Castle Quest* and *Pits*—all-text games with neither sound-effects nor graphics. Their *Star Trek,* however, does have simple graphics. The price of The Source: $20.75 per hour from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. and $7.75 all other times.

A relatively new service, The Delphi System, offers around 30 games, none of which have color, but some offering simple graphics. Among the games are *Backgammon, Blackjack, Hobbit,* as well as many sports games.

One last computer information service worth noting is the Telephone Software Connection, which, rather than downloading a game over the phone lines for a single play, will transmit the actual program over the phone lines so that you then own it and can play it at your convenience. The service sells eight game programs, including *World Currency, Wall St. Journal* and *Chess Connection*.

As if all this weren't enough to keep you in constant game contact, more tele-delivery systems are coming. In the next few years, teletext and videotex—two new types of information services to be transmitted over the cable lines and received by specially equipped television sets—will be available in many American cities. Three teletext and videotex programmers, Time Teletext, CBS Videotex and Integrated Communications Systems, plan to introduce games as part of their information packages. Time Teletext has experimented with phone-delivered games that have computer synthesis of human voices.

So kiss those cartridges bye-bye. Get the rest of the family off the phone. Some of the world's best video and computer games are soon to be a phone call, or a flick of the TV switch, away.

COMPUTER PICASSO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

DOODLE $39.95

This one has some advantages over the KoalaPad, but certain disadvantages. First off, it's joystick-controlled, not as comfortable to work with. But you *can* print out your drawings, full or 1/4-sized, on the VIC 1525, Gemini, Epson, Prowriter, NEC 8023, and C.ITOH 8510 or 1550 printers.

Aside from that, *Doodle* gives you most of the standard functions. You get to them differently, though, with a special menu for each of the main ones. Letters can be typed in and even rotated. The box mode does more than just draw a box. You can produce mirror and negative images of whatever's in it, or dump its contents anywhere onscreen.

If you want real accuracy, you can use "grid" to overlay the screen with a pattern of lines that improves your frame of reference when doodling. The only serious drawback is coloring in your work. First you "fill" an area with black, then you have to go over it with a color just as you would a crayon. It's slow, tedious and tricky. Coloring two objects that are close together is tough. But if you want to print out your work, it's your best bet right now. And you can create some genuine works of art once you've mastered the program's idiosyncracies.

City Software (800-558-1008), for C-64

PAINT MAGIC $39.95

This one also uses a joystick or trackball for input. Tapping the "f1" key on the C-64 displays a Command Menu at any time, to remind you which keys to punch for the various functions. Commands are coded so they'll be easy to remember: "C" for circle, "L" to plot lines, "B" for box, and so on.

Paint Magic stands out from the crowd by offering several unique ways to fill an area. Press "P" and it fills the enclosed space with a pure color. Select two colors, then hit "D"—the fill will look like a checkerboard, with the two hues alternating in little boxes. You can also fill with different colored vertical or horizontal lines of any two colors. Various patterns are available as fill material—and it's a simple matter to design your own patterns, a unique capability.

The cursor's speed can be adjusted from 1-8, and Magnify Mode allows you to do detailed pixel-painting. An amazing feature called "Grab" lets you do just that to anything you've drawn, then drag it around to draw with, and even rubber-stamp around the screen.

Overall, it's easier to apply colors with *Paint Magic* than with *Doodle*, but there's no way to print a copy of your art. Still, it's one of the best buys in this price range.

Datamost, for Commodore 64

OTHER SOFTWARE/HARDWARE FOR COMPUTER ARTISTS:

PowerPad: touch/tablet for Apple, Atari, IBM and C-64. $99.95; Chalkboard, Inc. 800-241-3989.

Paint: Atari. $39.95; Reston Publishing. 703-437-8900.

Magic Paintbrush: Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM PC. $29.95; Penguin Software. 312-232-1984

Atari Touch Tablet: Atari. $79; Atari 408-745-2000.

GTIA Draw: Atari. $49.95; Sar-An Computer Products. 716-632-3441

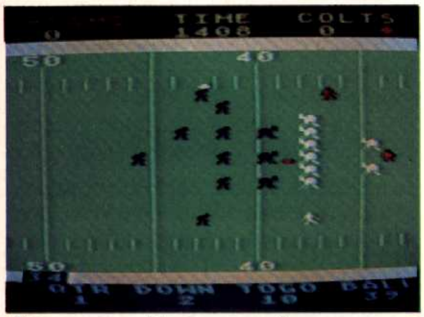
Graphics Composer: Atari. $39.95; Versa Computing.

Drawpic: Atari. $33.95 ($29.95 on cassette); Artworx. 716-425-2833.

PM Animator: Atari. $39.95; Don't Ask Software. 213-397-8811.

COMPUTER GAME BUYER'S GUIDE

By Shay Addams and Dan Gutman



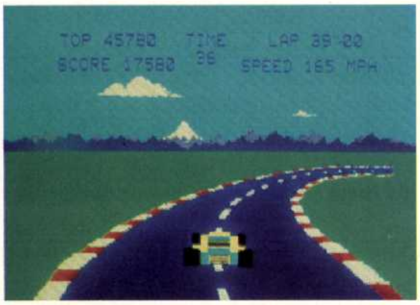
COMPUTER FOOTBALL STRATEGY B

If you'd rather coach than play quarterback, this authentically designed game is just the ticket for a satisfying season. Animation is limited, with only two players shown for each team, but the number of available plays more than makes up for this.

Offensive plays include the end run, draw, reverse, screen, long bomb and 20 others. The defense can select from ten plays. No joysticks are needed. Just tap a key to indicate your play, then your opponent does the same. (Or play against the computer.) The onscreen pigskinners go through the motions, then the results are displayed. All the vital data—current down, yards to go, etc.—are constantly shown, but the score can only be checked right after someone actually bags a few points.

At the end of each quarter and the game you get to see comprehensive stats such as yards gained running and passing, number of penalties and completed passes, and others. Sound consists of a few referee whistles and assorted bleeps. The Atari version isn't as strong visually as the others. But it's the only one that allows you to choose your team from various real pro teams that made it to the Super Bowl, such as the Green Bay Packers and Miami Dolphins. Overall this is a good simulation if you're into the finer strategic points of football. It's even endorsed by *Sports Illustrated*.

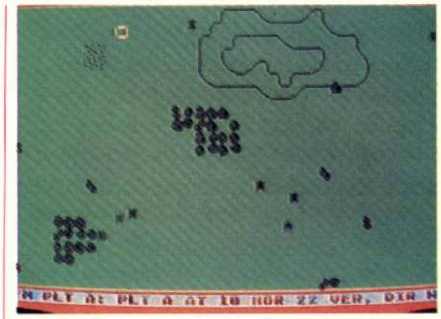
Avalon Hill, for C-64, Atari, TRS I & III with 64K.



POLE POSITION A

What more can we say? *Pole Position* is the best computer driving game in existence. True, it is not *exactly* the smash arcade game—the graphics are not as spectacular and you can't hope to achieve the realism of the original with a joystick for a steering wheel. But they've come pretty close, and this cartridge has features that aren't even *in* the arcade game. You can take your pick of three courses of varying difficulty (admittedly, they aren't very different from one another), and you can go for a practice spin without worrying about any other cars. You can even choose the length of your race, anywhere from two laps to eight. Analytically minded drivers will appreciate the dashboard, which indicates your speed, score, previous top score, gear, lap time and starting position number. Others can ignore it all and floor it. The crashes are not very frightening and it's a little hard to get back on the track after a collision, but in general Atari has done a remarkable job in bringing the arcade game home. If you love to drive, or even if you don't have your license yet, you should really own this cartridge. It makes all other driving games, including *Turbo*, obsolete.

Atari, for Atari.



COMBAT LEADER A

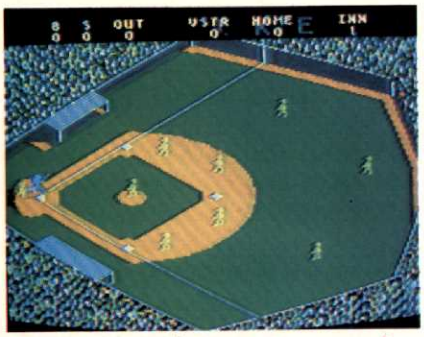
SSI's military simulations are unparalleled in authenticity. Unfortunately, they've also been slow-paced strategy games—too complex for many gamers. But *Leader* focuses on tactics in the field, and moves along at a rapid clip after you boot the disk.

In the novice game you command a five-tank platoon. The joystick is used to move a cursor to a spot, then you hit a key to order a specific tank or the entire platoon to go there or fire in that direction. Animation and sound are exceptional for SSI, though shoot-'em-up veterans may find the action a bit primitive. The real flaw is that units on both sides are the same color, occasionally making it difficult to tell who's who.

Four advanced scenarios include Recon, Attack & Destroy and others whose arsenals also boast mechanized infantry units. They include rifle, mortar and antitank squads, each represented by a little "x" on the screen. Hard to maneuver, but realistic.

After mastering the standard games, you can create your own scenarios by altering the terrain and tank characteristics. Speed, armor and firepower for real tanks from 1939-1942 are listed so you can stage historically authentic campaigns. SSI deserves a promotion in the field for *Combat Leader*.

Strategic Simulations, for Atari and C-64



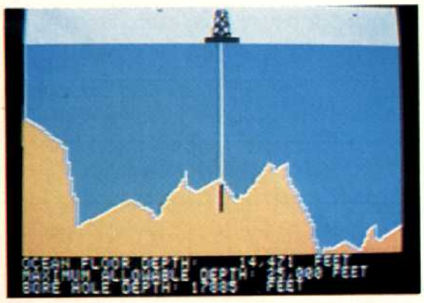
STAR LEAGUE BASEBALL A+

The only thing this game's missing is a light-beer commercial every ten minutes. You can play the computer or a friend, or select "batting practice" to sharpen your skills.

Swinging's fairly straightforward—just hit the fire button. Placing a hit for extra bases, though, takes more than a few trips to the plate. But it's fun even when you do strike out. After you make it to first, you may use the joystick to lead your runner—who can even steal bases if you're daring enough. (But the infielders can pick him off, tossing the ball back and forth until they nail the runner.)

Pitching is simplified, too, but not at the expense of authenticity. There are three pitchers to choose from, and each has eight different pitches, for a total of 24. Point the joystick in any of its usual eight directions and hit the button to fire off a fast ball, knuckler or whatever. You can toss the ball around the field, throw out runners anywhere or just pitch for a strikeout. Ground balls are fielded by joysticking the closest player. Relief pitchers can be called in from the bench during the seventh inning; batters can even bunt.

Gamestar, for Atari and C-64.


OCEAN FLOOR DEPTH: 14,471 FEET
MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE DEPTH: 25,000 FEET
BORE HOLE DEPTH: 17685 FEET

OIL BARONS C

No lasers, phasers or machine guns in this game. But you can do some backstabbing and throat-cutting of the economic variety. It's a simulation of the oil business, blending text and graphics in an uncommon manner.

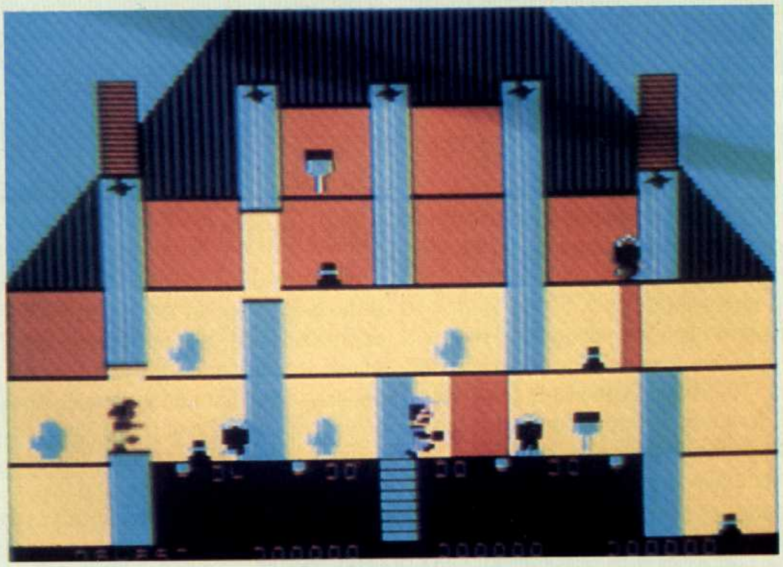
Plots of land are handed out by the computer; you mark them with plastic counters on a large board-map that comes with the game. The computer then establishes a monetary goal that up to eight players compete to reach first. Your grubstake is displayed, and you have the option of surveying or drilling any of your sites.

If you decide to go for it, you'll read how much it will cost to drill, etc. Then the text phase cuts to an animated scene in which trucks drive up and an oil rig is built. It slowly bores into the earth. If you strike oil, you'll soon receive royalty checks (printed like real check s on the screen) based on the number of gallons of oil produced daily.

Two types of games, Classic and Reality, and the option of personalizing and saving your own version contribute to *Oil Baron's* lifetime. It's good all-around strategy-type fun, but would have been better if the board were displayed on the screen.

Epyx, for Apple, IBM PC

GAME OF THE MONTH



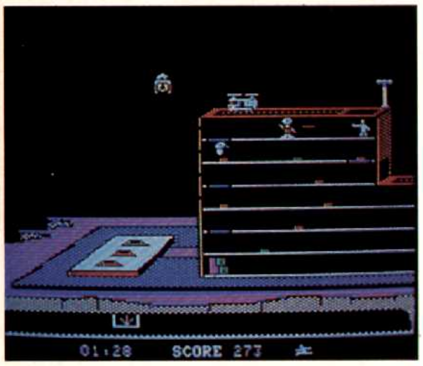
BRISTLES A+

The action here is fast and frenetic, and a lot more fun than many arcade games. You've got to paint all the rooms in a three-level building, then finish seven more houses in which the number of obstacles increases the higher you go. Traveling up and downstairs is accomplished by hopping into fast-moving elevators that will land on your head if you're not nimble enough.

So much happens here so quickly that you may be tempted to just sit back and watch. There's Brenda the Brat, who sticks her handprints in the fresh paint, a host of flying Half Pints, one big Bucket Chucker—and they're all actively animated. The music sets the tone of the game, with different selections from the Nutcracker Suite signaling the appearance and actions of certain characters. When you finish a level, the secret words appear. You must complete all eight houses to discover the entire message; each of the six skill settings has a different one.

You're also racing against the clock in *Bristles*, which heightens the action intensely as you hit the higher levels. After mastering the basic game (which could take months!), you can try using clear varnish if you think you can remember which rooms you've already painted. Or try painting in the dark! If you want a game with definite patterns, strategy, great sounds and plenty of action, this is the one.

First Star Software, for Atari computers, C-64 and 5200



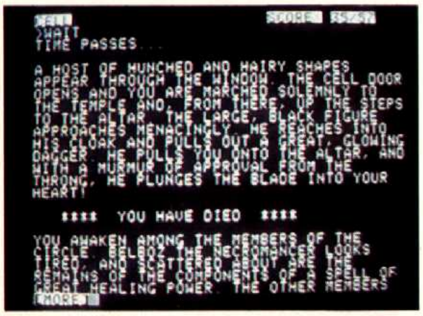
MINIT MAN A

This brilliantly animated action game really puts you through your paces. The premise is simple: you've got to rebuild a bridge so your three Minit Man missiles can cross over and be loaded into your silos for launching. You pilot a very maneuverable helicopter, pick up bridge parts on the far right of three screens that scroll horizontally, then fit them onto the bridge.

Sounds easy, but there's more. Anti-aircraft fire blasts away when you try to pick up or drop off parts. That can be avoided, but then you've also got to deal with the robots flying around, intent on blowing you to bits. There's also a five-minute deadline, and if you don't beat it the world explodes.

Oh, did I tell you about the computer in the basement of the building in the second screen? The robots land on top and walk down to knock out the computer, and if they do, the game ends at that point. So you must occasionally hop from the chopper and joystick your little man into action to wipe out the bots. *Minit Man* is an excellent example of a great game—it looks and plays easy, but is very challenging and hard to beat.

Penguin, for Apple



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CELL                         SCORE 35/57
>WAIT
TIME PASSES...

A HOST OF HUNCHED AND HAIRY SHAPES
APPEAR THROUGH THE WINDOW. THE CELL DOOR
OPENS AND YOU ARE MARCHED SOLEMNLY TO
THE TEMPLE AND, FROM THERE, UP THE STEPS
TO THE ALTAR. THE LARGE, BLACK FIGURE
APPROACHES MENACINGLY. HE REACHES INTO
HIS CLOAK AND PULLS OUT A GREAT, GLOWING
DAGGER. HE PULLS YOU ONTO THE ALTAR, AND
WITH A MURMUR OF APPROVAL FROM THE
THRONG, HE PLUNGES THE BLADE INTO YOUR
HEART!

   ****  YOU HAVE DIED  ****

YOU AWAKEN AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE
CIRCLE. BELBOZ THE NECROMANCER LOOKS
TIRED, AND SCATTERED ABOUT ARE THE
REMAINS OF THE COMPONENTS OF A SPELL OF
GREAT HEALING POWER. THE OTHER MEMBERS
[MORE]
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ENCHANTER A+

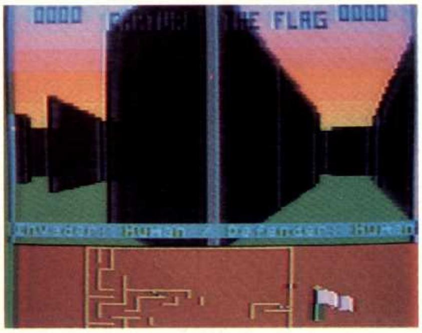
It must be magic. How else could Infocom keep conjuring up such winning all-text adventure games? I don't mean just the writing of the actual program, either. Laced with overtones of H.P. Lovecraft, the literary quality of *Enchanter* surpasses anything in the genre.

It's a strange tale of a novice Wizard, played by you, who must enter the castle of the evil warlock Krill and learn his secret in order to defeat him. You start off with a spell book and some basic spells, finding others alone the way. There's one that opens doors and another for undoing damage you may have done by misusing some other spell. There's even one for turning anything—even yourself—into a newt!

If you don't find food, water and a place to sleep, you'll perish, a realistic touch that was introduced to adventure games in Infocom's *Planetfall*. This one was written by Marc Blank and Dave Liebling, who did the original *Zork*. (In *Enchanter*, you actually encounter a wandering adventurer who's apparently lost his way while exploring a cave in the underground caverns of *Zork*.)

What's different about *Enchanter*? In addition to thinking logically the way you must in all Infocom games, this one requires you to think *magically*, as well.

Infocom, for Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM, Osborne


0000 CAPTURE THE FLAG 0000
Invaders: Human / Defenders: Human

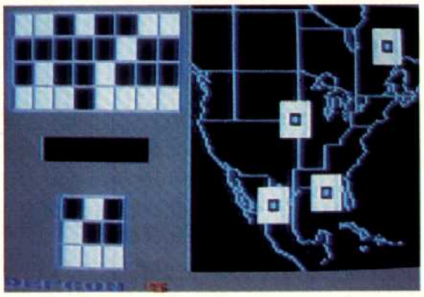
CAPTURE THE FLAG C

The latest wrinkle in maze games is the three-dimensional effect, in which you view the maze from within. It's been put to excellent use in Starpath's *Escape from the Mindmaster*, Milton Bradley's *Survival Run* and others.

In this version, you wander through the maze until you reach the other side, where an exit leads to the flag. This must be accomplished before your opponent, human or computer, catches you—in which case you lose. The split-screen shows your immediate surroundings, and the map below charts your progress and the location of the enemy. It looks great, but playability suffers because you have to keep looking back and forth from the screen to the maze.

This means the most effective way to play is for a friend to watch the maze and direct your actions. I suppose this could be fun, but it would certainly be a better game if you could spend more time looking at those nifty screens that stand out so well in 3-D. The music's eerie and provides a stimulating accompaniment for the unusual electronic action. Available on disk and cartridge.

Sirius, for Atari and Apple

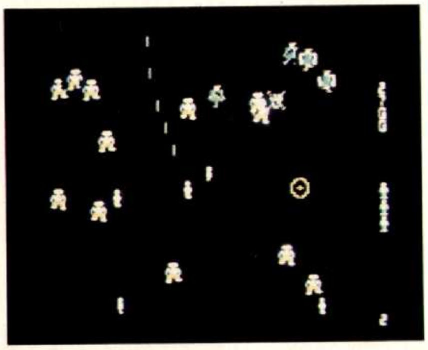


COMPUTER WAR C

Inspired by the movie *Wargames*, *Computer War* puts you in the NORAD control room, where somebody has tapped into the computer and activated a nuclear simulation program. The game is in three parts—monitoring the missiles (very easy), shooting the missiles (too hard), and matching the computer code to shut down the bases (also too hard). The first and third parts of this one-player game seem very professional, with clean graphics and well-thought-out concepts, but the second part is more like a pre-1980 Atari VCS game, and not a very good one at that. The missiles fly over a simple horizon about three times faster than you can track them, and when you miss, you've got to sit and wait while your gunsight slowly rotates to find it. Hitting the missiles becomes a matter of luck, not skill. If this is how our nation's defense operates, we'd better get out the shovels.

To the designer's credit, he has packed a lot of material into the cartridge. But as is often the case in "multi-game games," none of the individual elements stand up as an enjoyable game by themselves. If you really have a need to see the world destroyed by nuclear weapons, we suggest Probe 2000's *War Room* or the classic, *Missile Command.*

Thorn EMI, for Atari. Also for VIC-20 and TI 99/4A.



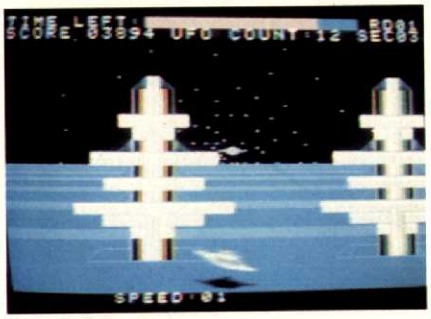
ROBOTRON: 2084

C

They nailed it. They nailed "The Impossible Game." *Robotron,* the arcade smash in which everything is happening at once, has been faithfully reproduced for home games, at least on the Apple. They're all here—the Grunts, Brains, Tanks, Sheroids, Hulks and Electrodes. As in the arcade game, man has created robots so intelligent, they have decided to eliminate man. You are the last hope of our civilization—save the last human family. The action is very fast, and the game is very tough.

Unfortunately, the game is so tough that you may never even see the Brains. While the arcade game had two joysticks (one to move, one to fire), the Apple only has one. This means you can only fire in the direction you are moving. It's almost impossible to get out of a tight situation because you can't reverse your fire. You can also play the game with paddles (if you've got paddles) or the keyboard (next to impossible). We found the only alternative is to jam the joystick between the knees and fire with the keyboard. Even so, you fire in almost random directions. It's too bad—this spectacular game is nearly unplayable. Perhaps double-joystick games should not be attempted on the Apple. Let's hope the other versions of the game utilize two joysticks at once.

Atarisoft, for Apple



BUCK ROGERS PLANET OF ZOOM

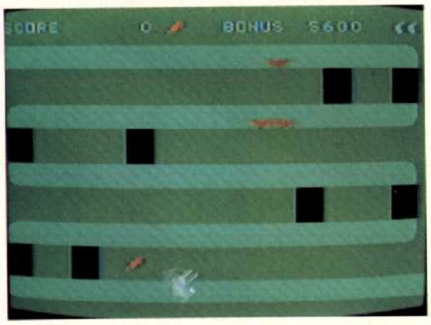
A

This is the free game that comes with the Adam, and you couldn't ask for a better translation of an arcade shoot-'em-up than what you get here. The colors are rich, and Buck's spaceship can be jockeyed around easily and with great flexibility—even with those flakey Coleco controllers.

It's on a fast-moving cassette that quickly loads the next screen when you destroy enough of the enemy ships and creatures that bounce around as you meet them head-on in the opening trench scene. Then there's the space battle sequence, followed by a scene that takes place on the planet's surface. Here you must slide your craft between a pair of towers while blasting aliens .

More than a half-dozen other exciting sequences make up this game, which you'll be playing for a long time before you make it to the end. The Adam does an excellent job of generating sharp, colorful graphics; hopefully future game releases will as effectively utilize this computer's capabilities.

Coleco, for Adam



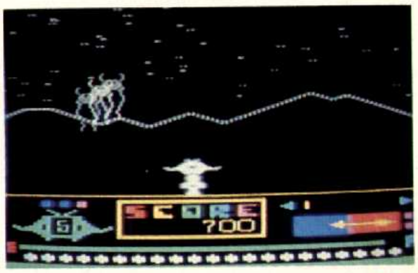
RABBIT TRAIL

C

At last, a computer game with weasels. In this climbing game, you're a relatively cuddly rabbit who has to hop from the bottom of the screen to the top. Various enemies—weasels, cars, traps, and hawks—get in the way. Rather than taking *Donkey Kong*-like jumps over them, you hide in conveniently placed rabbit holes along the way. You also have to grab hanging carrots in order to advance to the next screen. There are seven screens, and new characters enter the picture in the higher waves.

The game didn't particularly impress us. The characters are fairly cute and the game may be enjoyable for children, but after a while you wish the rabbit would just get run over by a car and be done with it. The game is surprisingly difficult for a children's game, though, so we don't know *who* it is supposed to appeal to. Some bouncy music would help, instead of uninspired beeping.

Funware, for TI 99/4A



LUNAR LEEPER

B+

You've defended your men in *Defender*, protected them in *Protector*, and lifted them out of harm's way in *Choplifter.* Now the boys are really in trouble—they're stranded in The Valley of the Leepers. These goofy enemies jump around trying to snare your ship out of the sky, while you're trying to pick up your guys and carry them to safety. You can shoot at them, but you're better off just to grab your men and split.

This is a delightful space game. It's challenging, and it has a sense of humor also. Very good graphics here—they have arranged it so that as you move, the stars in the background move at different speeds, providing a good 3-D effect. After you rescue your men, there is a second screen to the game in which you have to travel through the tunnels of Opthamalia and shoot a huge eyeball. Don't ask questions—just play and enjoy.

Sierra On-Line, for Commodore 64 and VIC-20

SWAP SHOP

Do you have some old games or equipment that you're tired of? Do you want to sell them or trade them for something else? The Swap Shop is a free (no catches, no strings attached, no ripoffs) service to our readers.

VIC-20 games: **Snakman**, **Exterminator**, **Bombs Away**, **Blackout**. $8 each or will trade for other VIC games. Also have other VIC tapes and carts. Lori Deutch, 33 Dogwood Drive, Jackson, NJ 08527.

Anyone want to sell your Atari 800? Great! If it's in good condition, call me and let's fix a price. Wayne Molnar, 686-7090. Or write to 1953 Morris Ave., Union, NJ 07083.

I'm interested in buying *any* VIC cartridges. Send list of titles and prices of games: Mitchell Bratton, 3208 Davis Ave., Roanoke, Virginia 24015.

Am selling my ColecoVision and 15 game cartridges plus two expansion modules. **Gorf**, **Venture**, **Lady Bug**, **Donkey Kong Jr.**, **Turbo** & Expansion Module #2, **Pitfall**, **Keystone Kapers**, **Wizard of Wor**, **Vanguard** & Expansion Module #1 that plays Atari carts! All still in box and in perfect condition. $500 or best offer. Call 344-1957 or 344-9763 and ask for Roy. Or write to: Roy Beckman, 1105 St. Louis Rd., Collinsville, IL 62234.

NEXT WAVE

MURDER!

Have you noticed that a lot of people have been getting bumped off in computer games lately? We'll give you a roundup of the best and worst in the first batch of murder mystery games.

EVERYTHING BUT JOYSTICKS!

Gamers do not live by joysticks alone. There are also trackballs, joyboards, touch sensors, keyboards and paddles. Find out about them!

WEIRD THINGS TO DO WITH A COMPUTER

We'll bet you didn't know you could use your computer to tune a piano, track your bowling average, handicap dog races or have a session with a psychiatrist. Well, you can do all that, and lots of other strange things.

HIT GAME HEROES

We chat with the designers of Wizardry, Choplifter, Castle Wolfenstein, Zaxxon, *and* The Arcade Machine.

PLUS . . .

The Mystery of Ms. Pac-Man! *Get it April 3rd!*

VCS games I desperately want to sell so I can buy my computer: **Air-Sea Battle**, **Space Invaders**, **Asteroids**, **Blackjack Casino**, **Video Pinball**, **Donkey Kong**, **Circus Atari** and **Defender**. Write to Jerry Le Leux, 13637 Bailey St., Whittier, CA 90601. Or call (213) 696-0713.

I have an Atari 400 with 32K and the 410 cassette recorder. Also the Programmer (contains *Inside Atari BASIC*, the reference manual and the BASIC cartridge). Also **Pac-Man**, two cassette games and a game I copied on cassette. All this and a joystick for only $180. Brad Nelson, 1947 No. 180 We, Orem, Utah 84057. Or call (801) 226-0275.

Shoot Chute is a 32K BASIC shoot-'em-up that I designed for the Atari computer. It requires paddle controllers and nerves of steel! Send $10.95 and specify disk or cassette to: George Kelley, 118 White St., Belmont, MA 02178.

For sale: Atari VCS and six cartridges. $100 or best offer. Write: Paul Karmaryor, 2130 N.W. 31st Ave., Apt. J-2, Gainesville, FL 32605.

Latest video game carts, disks and cassettes. All titles for all systems. Lowest prices—largest selection. Send 50¢ for lists and indicate which system(s) you own. Scott Parrish, 9303 Scotmont Dr., Tujunga, CA 91042.

Atari 5200 carts for sale: **Missile Command** and **Galaxian** for $15 each. Or **Qix**, **Defender**, **Centipede**, **Pac-Man** and **Kangaroo** for $20 each. I have original boxes and instructions. Also willing to trade for newer games. David Brunelli, 243 Pond St., Franklin, MA 02038.

Selling brand new carts for up to 80% retail for ColecoVision, Atari 2600 and 5200, TI 99 4/A, Intellivision and most other computers. Also handhelds from $10-$25. Much more. Send 50¢ for catalog or call 289-2959. (No collect calls accepted.) Also a VCS for sale. Erik Guldenzopf, 216 Samaritan Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

Are you sick of paying high prices for your Atari 400/800/1200 software? If so, send 25¢ and a self-addressed stamped envelope for price list to: Steve Stasinos, 193 Winona St., Peabody, MA 01960.

For sale: VIC-20, Datassette, 8 carts and 1 expander), 13 cassettes (7 games, 6 home business), 6 VIC books and 4 game mags. All in excellent condition. Current value $450. Want $350 but can negotiate. Kevin Provins, 1029 E. 13th, Carthage, MO 64836.

Like to sell your VIC disk drive, expander or carts? Write to James A.A. Kirk, 810 6th Ave. N.E., Swift Current, Saskatoon, Canada, S9H 2M8.

ATTENTION 5200 OWNERS: Now there's a club devoted to you. Monthly newsletter and discounts on purchases of carts and other merchandise. Write for free info and issue. xbertz, the supersystem association, 157, Racine, WI 53402.

Selling game I designed for Apple computers. Available on disk only. It's called **Lotto** and comes with instructions and protective sleeve. Asking $9.95. WILL TRADE!!! "Lotto," 313 Spring Circle, Norristown, PA 19403.

For sale: VCS with joystick, paddles, **Donkey Kong** and **Combat**. $65 or best offer. Patrick Howard, 968 Enfield St., Enfield, CT 06082.

VCS games for sale: **Warlock**, **Space Cavern**, **Space Attack**. Make offer. **Space Attack** only plays 2-3 screens before it messes up. Then it must rest awhile. Mark Butler, Route #1, Box 29-C, Dewy Rose, GA 30634.

Am looking for **Popeye** cartridge for Atari 400/800 from Parker Brothers. Best offer. Also Gamestar **Baseball** on cassette. John Schroth, Carmichael Hill Rd., Westernville, NY 13486.

Brand new, never-used video and computer game carts. Have all the new ones just coming out for half of what stores sell them. For free price list, write your name, address and phone number and type of system and send it to: David Cohen, Church Hill Rd., Washington Depot, CT 06794.

Anyone out there want an Atari VCS for $65? **Zaxxon** and **Combat** included free. Will trade for VIC with cassette recorder. (But it's OK if you don't have the recorder.) Wade Guggino, 14300 S.W. 88 Ave. Apt 12, Miami, FL 33176.

If you would like to place a free ad in the Swap Shop, send your ad along with your name and address to: Swap Shop, Computer Games, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106. We will print as many ads as fit the page. We accept no responsibility after an ad is published.

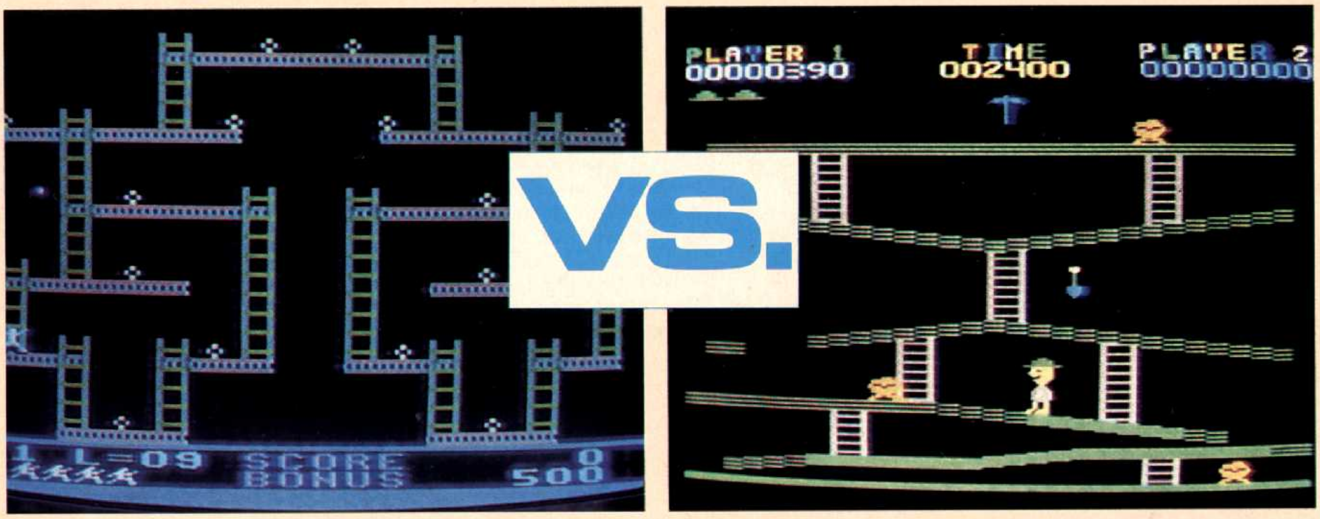
ONE ON ONE

JUMP MAN

(Epyx, for C-64 and Atari computers)

MINER 2049ER

(MicroFun/Big Five, for Apple/Atari)



BOTH *JUMP MAN* AND *MINER 2049ER* OFFER SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT APT to find in other "twitch"-type games – the near-total absence of repetition. Most climbing games simply get faster the longer you play them. These two introduce you to *new* challenges as you progress from level to level. Although the objective of each game remains somewhat consistent, the playfield configurations are different on each level. *Jump Man*, for example, boasts 30 levels, while *Miner* offers ten.

Over the long run, *Jump Man* is the better value since it is actually five games in one. Most games offer options that, in reality, are speed settings. Instead of using a speed setting to select the difficulty of the game, *Jump Man* allows the player to set both speed *and* difficulty levels individually. Players can select from five variations: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, the Grand Loop and the Randomizer. Each variation encompasses a set number of levels, culminating with the Headquarters sequence. The Beginner setting offers eight easy levels. The Intermediate and Advanced offer ten and twelve. For a marathon session you can select the Grand Loop, which runs through all 30 levels in succession. The Randomizer picks a random selection of all the levels, so you can play the higher ones even if you're not good enough to reach them on your own.

In addition to choosing a game, the player can also regulate the Jump Man's speed. There are eight paces to pick. The speed you select does not alter the movements of any other game characters.

Jump Man accommodates up to four players. You'd be smart to have a good replacement controller on hand for this game. As its name suggests, *Jump Man* is a jumping, climbing and leaping contest that demands a responsive joystick.

While not as diverse as *Jump Man*, *Miner 2049er* is also a complex jumping and climbing challenge. The idea is to "mask the entire framework." Masking is just a fancy word for covering. The objective is to move your character, Bounty Bob, over the framework until every inch of it has been covered. Along the way you must avoid a bunch of silly-looking creatures known as Mutants. Bob can hop over them or kill them.

I found *Miner* to be the more difficult of the two simply because the game offers no speed/difficulty variations. Play starts out tough and gets tougher. At times this game can get downright frustrating, but never to the point that you would feel like quitting. There's a fine line between impossible and challenging. This game is right on it.

My only complaint about *Miner* is the dreaded "when you die you gotta start all over again." *Jump Man*, on the other hand, gives you credit for the bombs you defused before death. Your new character will appear in the original starting position, but any charges collected up to that point will be omitted.

Graphically, *Miner* has the look of a cartoon strip. Bounty Bob is only human-like in the most basic sense. For the most part he is nothing more than a head and hat perched atop a pair of legs. Overall, the graphics are good and to a point, humorous. Aesthetically, *Jump Man* is even more skeletal. The game's namesake is nothing more than a stick figure. In comparison to Bounty Bob, he is quite small. His size, though, lends added appeal to the game.

As I said, *Jump Man* is the better value. But in this comparison we don't have a good game and a bad game—we've got two *excellent* games.

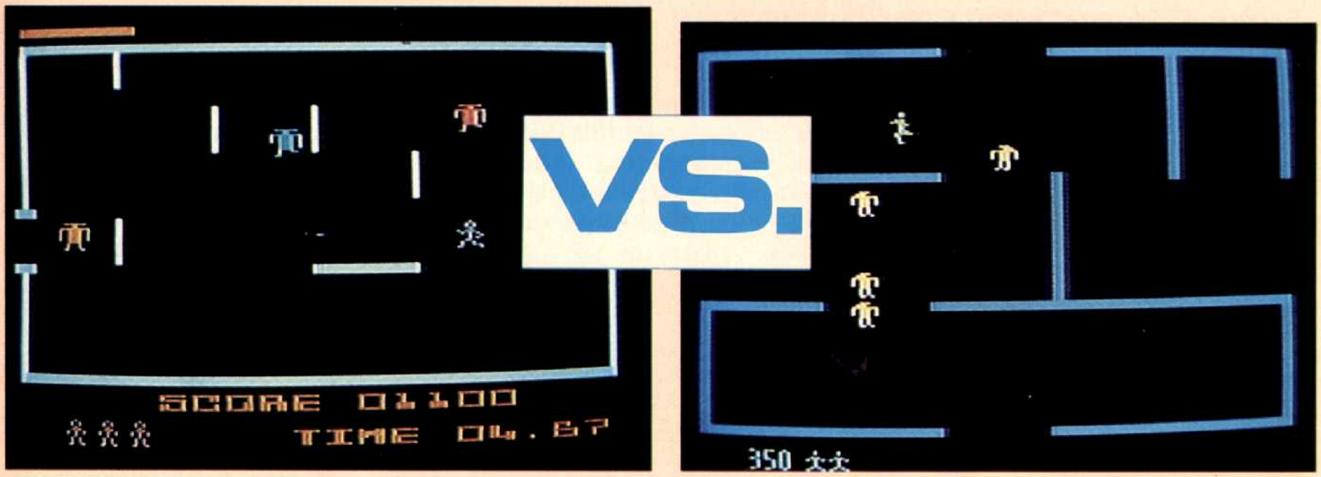
ONE ON ONE

K-RAZY SHOOTOUT

(CBS, for 5200)

BERZERK

(Atari, for 5200)



THERE'S NOTHING CRAZY ABOUT CBS ELECTRONICS' *K-RAZY SHOOT-OUT,* nor is there anything truly berserk about Atari's *Berzerk*. Both of these games are simple, straightforward shoot-'em-ups for the 5200. One is fun to play, the other – well, not so fun.

Originally a Stern coin-op, *Berzerk* was one of the first games to integrate shoot-'em-up action with maze game play mechanics. If this game enjoys any distinction it would be that it was the first not-so-cute maze game. It is still the best.

Cast as a humanoid (why not just a human?) the player must fight his way out of a potentially endless line of rooms that are teeming with robots. Ideally, you should blast every robot you encounter, thereby qualifying for bonus points. If, say, you exit one of the rooms without vaporizing every member of the opposition, a computer generated voice exclaims, "Chicken, fight like a robot!" This voice synthesis should come as a surprise to the 5200 owner, since no add-on voice module is required. Actually, it is no better or worse-sounding than speech generated by Mattel's Intellivoice. Its inclusion here is welcome for two reasons —first, it's free, and secondly, who could imagine playing *Berzerk* without that sinister voice hurling insults at you?

Since Atari has managed to capture that snide voice in this cartridge, *Berzerk* passes the "faithfulness to its inspiration" test with flying colors. Graphically, *Berzerk* is simple—stick figures, solid colors and mild looking explosions. Normally, I would have to call visuals this spartan boring, but they work here.

In concept and story line, *K-Razy Shoot Out* is nearly identical to *Berzerk*. The differences that do exist are slight. Instead of a nameless humanoid you are a space commander. Also, the bad guys, called "alien droids," attack only in threes. When one is shot, another appears to take the place of his fallen comrade. Once replacement droids cease to pop up, it's time to exit to the next level.

Visually, *K-Razy Shoot Out* has the look of a VCS game. The droids are blocklike and look like garbage cans with legs. Compared to the robots in *Berzerk* they look silly, even harmless. Although the maze configurations in *Shoot Out* potentially can be very complex, a great number of them are simple layouts with fewer than a dozen barriers.

It seems that a good bit of the available memory was earmarked for sound effects and visual embellishments that, admittedly, are pleasing at first. All too quickly though, they grow to become annoying. An example—when your space commander is killed, you are treated to this drawn out death sequence, complete with funeral dirge. Also, the transition between screens is way too big a production, as is tallying bonus points.

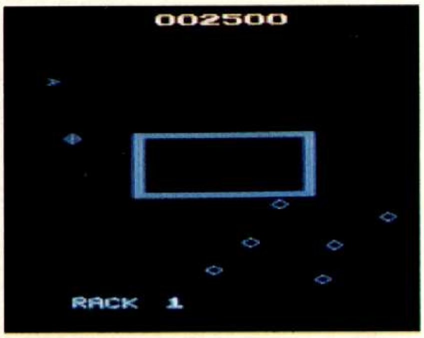
The one drawback common to both games is the 5200 controller. While it proved to be mildly disruptive when playing *Berzerk*, the stick rendered *K-Razy Shoot Out* almost unplayable. In comparison to the *Berzerk* Humanoid, who lopes along, your space commander in *Shoot Out* moves at an all-out sprint. All too often the stick failed to respond to my commands and the poor commander went crashing to his death.

Since the quirky 5200 controller's bad behavior is magnified here, I'm hesitant to recommend *K-Razy Shoot Out*. If you own a replacement controller, then it might be worth considering. Fans of this type of game, though, should go with the original. Good no-nonsense play and top-notch voice generation make *Berzerk* one of the finest for the 5200 to date.

By Michael Blanchet

VIDEO GAME BUYER'S GUIDE

By Ray Dimetrosky



OMEGA RACE

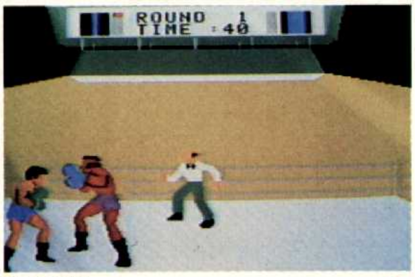
B

You command a starship in weightless, deep space. You bounce off barriers while shooting at the enemy and avoiding their fire. In more difficult games, your attackers turn into death ships that leave behind hazardous mines.

Both the ColecoVision contest and CBS's version for the VCS capture the fun of the arcade hit. Coleco's game has plenty of options, including fast-bounce, additional tunnels and gates, and reflective walls. The CBS contest has, naturally, been simplified due to memory limitations of the VCS. Nevertheless, even though it features only one game with no real options, the play action of the original has been maintained.

In both games, your ship is controlled like the VCS *Asteroids*. Turn your joystick left or right to move counterclockwise or clockwise, and press a button to fire or thrust. Obviously, games like this are easier to control when your joystick has two firing buttons. No problem with the ColecoVision, but what about the VCS? The designers have cleverly transformed the Atari joystick into a "booster grip" joystick by including an apparatus with two action buttons that slides over it. Both games have adequate graphics and sound effects, although the CBS game sounds and looks less outstanding. Again, due to the limitations of the VCS, in the CBS game the images frequently flicker. One special feature of Coleco's program: the designers have included a two-player, head-to-head version. Now you must simultaneously battle the computer *and* a human opponent. As the clock ticks away, the action progresses at a super-fast pace. This game is the most fun of all.

Coleco, for ColecoVision, CBS, for Atari VCS



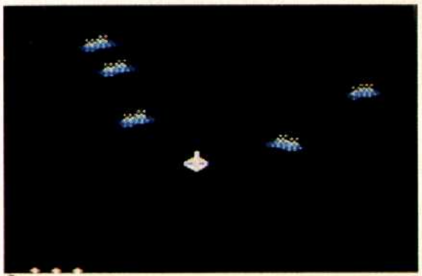
ROCKY

A-

If you are a boxing enthusiast, this is the game you've been waiting for. The action begins with a chorus of the *Rocky* theme as his name passes over his picture. Now you're inside the ring and it's Rocky against Clubber. A press of the yellow button on your Super Action Controller and your boxer punches your opponent's head. Red leads to a punch of the body, purple allows you to block his punches, and blue causes you to duck. The scoreboard indicates the round, time remaining, and your level of daze and fatigue. Punches to the head cause you to daze your opponent, while hits to the body result in fatigue. As either boxer becomes more dazed, he becomes more vulnerable to a knockout.

This is one of those games you'll either love or hate. If you don't enjoy boxing, or feel that it is too violent, then you certainly won't enjoy beating your opponent to a pulp. The graphics are terrific and there's a great musical soundtrack. You can play against the computer at four different skill levels and it's up to you whether you're Rocky or Clubber. There's also a demonstration mode and one head-to-head contest. As in a real fight, you do not know who is ahead all of the time, although these judges are kind enough to post a score at the end of each round. *Rocky* is hardly the most action-packed video game ever, but it captures the thrills of boxing.

Coleco, for ColecoVision



STRONGHOLD

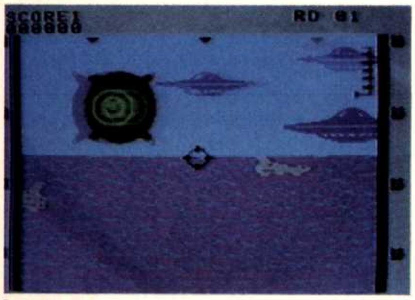
C

In *Stronghold* you control a spaceship that is attacking an asteroid. Patrolling the asteroid is the "Command Crawler," whose job is to release weapons to destroy you. You must blast through a shield and destroy it while avoiding a barrage of its attackers.

Stronghold is reminiscent of early, but exciting, VCS contests. There's plenty of action here and the game moves at a ferocious pace. Like Activision's *Laser Blast* and Atari's *Asteroids*, your primary job is to shoot and run. The graphics and sound effects are routine, but the superior play action makes up for these weaknesses. And, as in earlier VCS contests, there are 16 game variations. There are over 25 different asteroids and you can begin the game on one of four levels by manipulating the left and rignt difficulty switches. The higher asteroids have much better defenses.

There are a few neat twists to *Stronghold*. The designers have made your mission a tough one by not allowing you to shoot directly to either side. They also utilize sound in an interesting way: the louder the Command Crawler sounds, the closer it is to you. When you are locked into position over it, a shrill alarm is set off. *Stronghold* will keep you hopping for hours, as long as you're not yet sick of this type of game. Many gamers will find it a refreshing change from the more complex recent releases.

CommaVid, for Atari VCS



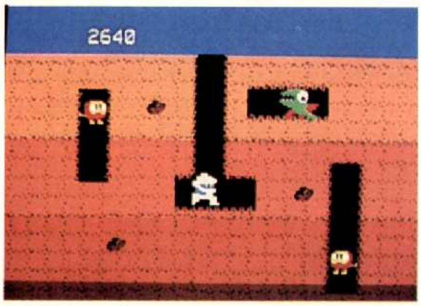
SUBROC B

Your mission here is to defend the sea against cruisers and battleships. But what's that up above? The sky is filled with flying saucers and drones. So aim your crosshair sight to fire missiles into the air, but be ready to switch your attention back to sea level. Fortunately, you're equipped with torpedoes to combat underwater opponents.

Subroc is an above average shoot-'em-up. What separates this from the countless programs requiring you to battle some unknown enemy is the vast multitude of your opponent's fleet. The screen is constantly filled with hordes of enemy attackers. The second you eliminate the on-screen saucers, more battleships appear. The action is nonstop. As in most recent shoot-'em-ups, there is a horizontally scrolling field. In *Subroc*, however, you must pay particular attention to your vertical position. If you are not at the right level, the enemy will slip right past you. As if there weren't enough obstacles to make your mission nearly impossible, in every even numbered round time gradually shifts to reveal *evening!* The graphics in these scenes are particularly impressive. And just wait until you see the explosions when you're hit! The sound effects are also top notch. In fact, in many ways *Subroc* is the ideal shoot-'em-up game.

Unless you're a fan of the coin-op *Subroc*. The action's too slow, the flaming fireballs are missing and the sound's weaker.

Coleco, for ColecoVision

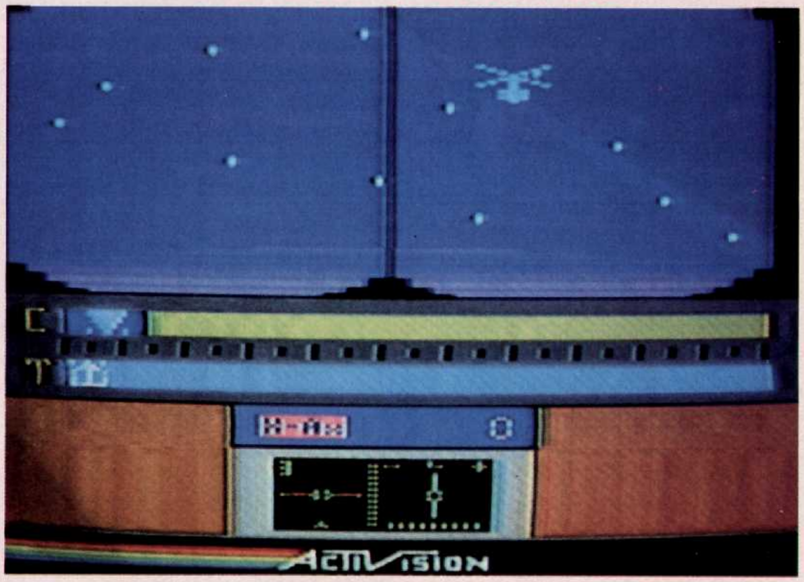


DIG DUG A

It's no secret that thanks to the 5200 controllers, many arcade hits lose something in the translation to that system. What fun is *Ms. Pac-Man* when you can't change directions quickly enough? Happily, since *Dig Dug* is a slower-moving game without set paths to travel on, this frustration is eliminated and *Dig Dug* looks, sounds and plays exactly the same as it's predecessor. In this version, you can begin play at any of 12 different levels. One slight weakness of the game appears in later rounds. When two creatures are in the same tunnel, moving in different directions, they begin to flicker. Unlike the flickering that destroys so many VCS contests, here you'll barely notice it. You'll be having too much fun.

Atari, for Atari 5200

GAME OF THE MONTH

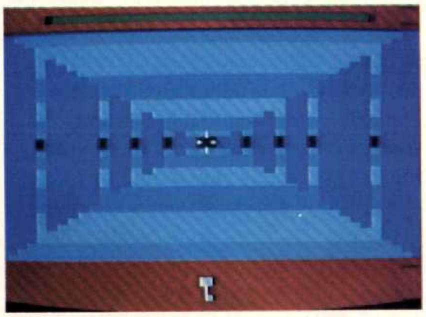


SPACE SHUTTLE A+

Did you ever notice how many times your friends tell you a game is wonderful, but when you pick up the joystick it's as much fun as watching reruns of *The Love Boat?* What is great fun for one gamer may be boring to another. This has never been more true than with *Space Shuttle.*

Your assignment is to test your piloting capabilities by launching your craft and docking with orbiting satellites. Performing these tasks is far from easy, and it will be necessary to first study your flight manual in order to achieve success. This game requires you to constantly flip switches and adjust your joystick. (Docking involves using the joystick to correct your X, Y and Z axes). The graphics are just about the best ever for the VCS. During liftoff, as your craft shakes violently, the picture on your screen vibrates as well. The effect is incredible. *Space Shuttle* may also be the first game that utilizes every single VCS switch! In fact, the cartridge comes with an overlay that you place over the VCS control panel (owners of Gemini and ColecoVision plus VCS expansion module will have problems here). The main arguments for and against Space Shuttle will center around the game play. Many people will complain that the action is not fast enough. But for adventurers who like to experience the real thing, *Space Shuttle* is a dream come true.

Activision, for Atari VCS

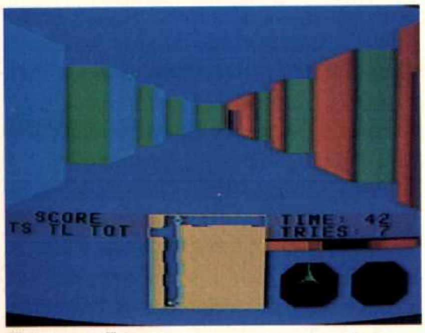


SURVIVAL RUN B

You control a starfighter that you pilot through a maze of "subterranean caverns." You shoot at attacking aliens and an enemy force field. When you reach the end of a tunnel you must choose between two paths. Choose the correct one and your mission continues. But if you make the wrong choice, it's back to square one.

Milton Bradley's Cosmic Commander comes packaged with the game. Now, instead of pushing a joystick, you hold on to a large device that pushes forward and backward, turns left or right, and has an easy to reach button. You really feel like you're piloting a space ship. But what about the game itself? Well, there's a pretty impressive 3-D effect, but no real graphics besides that. The sound effects come out of your TV screen *and* the Cosmic Commander. They're adequate but nothing spectacular. The biggest drawback to *Survival Run* is the computer map above your starfighter's view. It's hard to make out the fine detail, so when you choose between a left or right tunnel, it's really pot luck! Even with these drawbacks, the game is great fun.

Milton Bradley, for Atari VCS

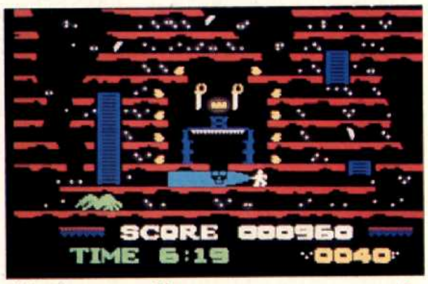


ESCAPE FROM THE MINDMASTER A

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to be a rat in a maze? Well, if you play *Escape From The Mindmaster,* you'll find out! An alien has placed you in a maze. To get out, you must also discover hidden puzzle pieces and place them in their appropriate holes. In many cases the passageways are surrounded by deadly force fields, and romping around the maze is the alien's treacherous pet.

Mindmaster is a thinking game. If you're into puzzle books that challenge your mind, you'll probably get into *Mindmaster.* Just so you don't get a headache from thinking too hard, the designers have included additional tests. These games within the game are more like the traditional shoot-'em-ups. The real fun though, is finding your way through the maze. You're aided by a map and an arrow that indicates your current direction. Thanks to superior graphics, the maze itself is an incredible mass of 3-D hallways and doors. The feeling you get when you find hidden puzzle pieces or rooms that lead you to your eventual safety is wonderful. And there are six different mazes so you won't quickly master the game. This is the closest thing to a real adventure game for the ColecoVision system, and owners who are only familiar with action games should try it.

Starpath, for ColecoVision

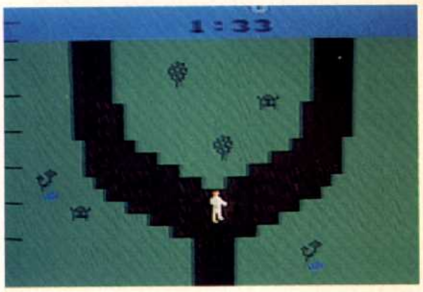


MOUNTAIN KING A-

Imagine running around on a mountain covered with diamonds. Collect 1000 diamonds and a tune begins to play. The music plays louder when you get closer to the Flame Spirit. Find it and advance to the temple, which is guarded by the Skull Spirit. If you give him the flame, he'll let you in and you can scoop up the golden crown. Now all you need to do is make it to the mountaintop. But hurry—your time is limited, and eerie bats are trying to steal your treasure.

Originally a computer game, CBS has skillfully translated *Mountain King* to the VCS and 5200. The play action is similar in both contests although, naturally, the 5200 version boasts superior, more detailed graphics. *Mountain King* is an action-adventure game, so it won't appeal to everyone. You have to have the patience to read through the instruction manual, and it takes time to master each step of the game. Once you get the hang of it though, you're in for some great fun. And *Mountain King* features some neat special effects, like a flashlight that allows you to see things that are not ordinarily visible. Add to this the designer's clever use of music and you end up with an excellent game.

CBS, for Atari VCS and 5200. Also available for C-64 and Atari computers.



ARTILLERY DUEL/ CHUCK NORRIS D

Artillery Duel is a one-on-one gun battle and *Chuck Norris Superkicks* is a karate contest. In *Artillery Duel* you take turns firing shots at your opponent. For each shot you must take into account your opponent's distance, your gun placement, the terrain, the wind direction, and the wind speed. After you adjust your gun based on these factors, you shoot. Sounds thrilling, doesn't it? To the game's credit, there are several thousand combinations of terrain and gun emplacement. The game is colorful, but the graphics are dreadful.

In *Chuck Norris Superkicks* you begin as a white belt. If you defeat your opponent in a karate match you advance to a new screen, as an orange belt. After four more screens, you reach the monastery. Now you must defeat the huge force of the Ninja. The graphics here are slightly better than those in *Artillery Duel.* The game isn't quite as boring as *Artillery Duel,* but it's still far from exciting. Two games aren't better than one if they're both mediocre.

Xonox, for Atari VCS

SCHOOL'S OUT!

THE LATEST IN EDUCATIONAL GAMING

TOUCH-TYPE OR DIE!

By Stick Masters

Last week I took my five-year-old sister Tina to the office to try out a game called *Learning with Leeper*, from Sierra On-line. It contains four different games that she really enjoyed. To start, she joysticked a "leeper," which looks like a jumping one-eyed Martian, around the menu to select a game. The first one was Dog Count.

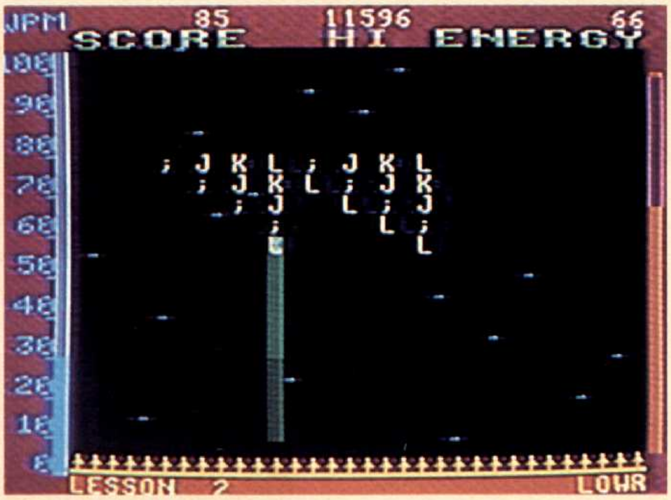
Pictures of dogs were on the left side of the screen, waiting in front of empty dog food bowls. Tina moved the leeper, who's standing on a platform in the middle of the screen, up or down a list of numbers on the right. When she picked the right number for the amount of dogs, a little song played and the dogs wagged their tails. When she picked a wrong number, it let her know.

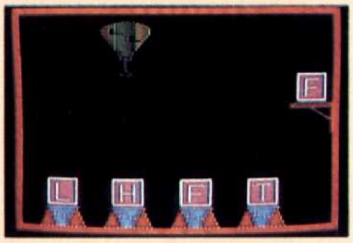
The second part was Balloon Pop. Tina had to move a balloon to the bottom of the screen and pick up a shape that matches one on the right-hand side. It teaches how to pay attention to detail and learn the shapes of letters and stuff.

The third was Leap Frog, a maze game featuring a frog. Tina liked this one even more. It's a very simple maze, but Tina thought it was a big deal that she could solve it.

The last game, Screen Painting, was amazing. A line drawing of a house in the mountains is provided on the first screen. You move the cursor around the color menu to pick up colors and fill in areas of the picture. You can also draw pictures with the joystick on a separate screen. It's like an electronic coloring book and doodle screen combined into one.

Next Tina played *Juggle's House*, which has two similar games. In the first one, you put a blue overlay around the T, Y, U, G, H and J keys. The kid is supposed to push buttons in or outside the blue area on command (I had to tell Tina when to push the buttons, because she doesn't know how to read yet). She figured it out pretty quickly once she got the hang of it. Then she played the part of the game that shows what upper and lower mean. A different blue overlay was placed on the keyboard to cover up all the keys except the top and bottom rows, and she did the same thing.





Learning with Leeper *and* **Type Attack. Type Attack** *is like* **Space Invaders** *with letters. You don't have to aim, but you have to hit the right key to shoot the letters out of the sky. Either you type, or you die.*

Juggle's House is a good first game for pre-schoolers; it gives them something to do on the computer without breaking it. It's like the Mother Goose of home software. The only drawback is that it doesn't teach anything but the concepts of upper and lower, inside and outside. I'm not sure that kids would want to play it more than a few times — it's too simple.

After Tina finished, I played a game called *Type Attack* (Sirius). You use the keyboard, and it teaches you the basics of touch typing. There are 99 speeds to choose from, and two parts to each game—Character Attack and Word Attack. In Character Attack, you face three separate waves of attacking letters, just like in *Space Invaders*. All you have to do is hit one of the correct keys to wipe out a letter. The first wave is made of the letters A, S, D and F. Each wave is eight columns long and eight letters tall.

Only letters at the bottom of a column can be disintegrated. Every time you press a wrong key, you lose one unit of energy. If any letters reach the bottom of the screen before you can type them, you lose 35 units. Once you lose your 100 energy units, the game ends.

In Word Attack, groups of complete words fly across the screen. You have to type the word and hit the space bar when a shield is blinking above it before the word disappears off the left side. You get one unit of energy for each word you type correctly, and lose one for those that escape.

You can also create your own letter lists on the Lesson Creator, and there's a Hall of Fame for keeping track of high scores. The instructions show where to correctly put your fingers on the keyboard. Though I didn't notice it while playing, *Type Attack* really helped me increase my ability to type accurately and quickly without looking down at the keys.

The last game I played was *WordRace* (Don't Ask Software), one of the best games I've ever played. Not only did I learn more from *WordRace* than from any educational game I ever played, but it was also more fun!

It's really simple: after picking out one of the three difficulty levels and how many questions you want to answer, you see a word flash at the top of the screen. Below it is a multiple choice; you must choose the proper definition for the word from that list. A bonus timer begins counting down very quickly from 600. If you answer correctly, the number remaining is your score. Get it wrong and that number is subtracted from your score. There's also a Claim to Fame game that uses historical names and a Sports Derby for sports history questions (my personal favorite).

I really liked *WordRace*—it reminded me of *Fax*, the arcade trivia quiz game. In fact, it's more like a school test than an educational "game." But it's *not* an educational game, it's designed for having fun! It's actually more fun than the educational games that are programmed to look like arcade games.

ATARI 5200

38 new games for

Owners of VCS and the Intellivision have no problem finding software. But what about people with the newer systems? It's easy enough to find games by Coleco and Atari, but what else is out there? We did some digging, and here's a comprehensive list of current and future ColecoVision and Atari 5200 releases from everyone *except* Coleco and Atari.

ATARI 5200

Astro Chase: Space shoot-out with incredible graphics-defend the Earth against alien mines and spaceships. Parker Brothers.

Blueprint: Try to save Daisy Damsel from Ollie Ogre by building the machine that can eliminate him—just find the parts. CBS.

Bristles: Paint buildings, if you can. First Star (current).

Buck Rogers Planet of Zoom: Based on the comic book character—defend yourself against approaching danger. Sega.

Congo Bongo: Climbing game based on the arcade hit—help Bongo travel through the jungle. Sega.

Escape from the Mindmaster: 3-D maze game—try to escape from the Mindmaster's prison. Starpath (current).

Fall Guy: Based on the TV show. Fox (current).

Flip and Flop: A scrolling 3-D maze game. First Star (current).

Gorf: Translation of the arcade hit—space shoot-out, multiphase contest in which you try to defend yourself against attack. CBS (current).

Kaboom: Prevent the bad guy from exploding his bombs by strategically placing your water buckets. Activision.

K-Razy Shoot Out: Shoot at alien robots in different mazes. CBS.

Megamania: Burgers-and-bow-ties-in-space shoot-'em-up. Activision (current).

Miner 2049er: Help Bounty Bob travel through 10 screens in his pursuit of Yukon Yohan. Big Five.

Pitfall: Action adventure game—Pitfall Harry forages through the jungle as he searches for riches. Activision.

Q*Bert: Cube climbing game based on the arcade hit. Parker Brothers.

River Raid: Combat game—guide your jet up the river and shoot at enemy attackers. Activision.

Scraper Caper: Help Bounty Bob put out the fire as the stairs collapse and the elevator falls. Big Five.

COLECOVISION

the super systems

COLECO VISION
DONKEY KONG
COLECOVISION

Star Trek: Space game based on the arcade version—use your phasers, warp speed and combat control panel as you fly through the galaxy. Sega.

Super Cobra: Fly through enemy territory as you avoid ominous obstacles. Parker Brothers.

Wizard of Wòr: An arcade translation of the maze game—have a shoot-out with the Wizard in the dungeons of Wor. CBS.

COLECOVISION

Apple Cider Spider: Move your spider safely through the juice plant. Sierra-On-Line.

B.C.'s Quest for Tires: Based on the comic strip. Sierra-On-Line

Escape from the Mindmaster: 3-D maze game—try to escape from the Mindmaster's prison. Starpath.

Evolution: "Evolve" from an amoeba to human in multi-screen action game. Sierra-On-Line.

Fall Guy: Based on the TV shows. Fox (current).

Fathom: Try to find the three pieces of Neptune's trident to free his daughter from prison. Imagic (current).

Globe Grabber: Pinball game that includes bells, lights and buzzers. Micro Fun.

Mogul Maniac and Joyboard: First-person giant slalom ski race—try to beat your opponent's time in two runs. Amiga.

Miner 2049er: Help Bounty Bob travel through 11 screens in his pursuit of Yukon Yohan. Micro Fun.

Moonsweeper: Space game—try to rescue Malanium miners on Lunar Alpha Red. Imagic.

Nova Blast: Space game. Imagic.

Pitfall: Action adventure—Pitfall Harry roams through the jungle as he searches for riches. Activision.

Popeye: Three-screen climbing game based on the arcade hit—help Popeye catch Olive's hearts, notes and cries for help. Parker Brothers.

Q*Bert: Cube climbing game based on the arcade hit. Parker Brothers.

Scraper Caper: Help Bounty Bob put out the fire as the stairs collapse and the elevator falls. Micro Fun.

Time Runner: Try to build space platforms before the aliens eat them up. Micro Fun.

War Room: Strategy game of nuclear warfare between the United States and Russia. Odyssey.

Wing War: Mystery search game with a scrolling field and unusual graphics. Imagic.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD FRIED

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You don't have to name any aliens, figure out which screen in from what game or even know the difference between RAM and ROM. Just fill in the following blanks—if yours is chosen in our random drawing, you'll win a free IBM PC jr!

ABOUT YOU

1. Are you: Male ☐ Female ☐ How old are you? ______

2. Which best describes your family's total annual income before taxes?

☐ Under $15,000
☐ $15,000-24,999
☐ $25,000-34,999
☐ $35,000-49,999
☐ $50,000-74,999
☐ $75,000-or more

3. How many hours a week do you play computer games?
1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 4 hours ☐ 8 hours ☐ more ☐

4. How many hours a week do you play arcade video games?
1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 4 hours ☐ 8 hours ☐ more ☐

5. How many hours a week do you play home video games?
1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 4 hours ☐ 8 hours ☐ more ☐

6. In addition to games, what else do you use your computer for? ______________________

7. Which of the following products are in your home? (Circle name if planning to buy within 6 months.)

☐ Atari VCS
☐ Atari 5200
☐ ColecoVision
☐ Intellivision
☐ Odyssey
☐ Accessory joystick
☐ Atari 400/800 computer
☐ Apple
☐ TRS-80
☐ Commodore VIC-20
☐ Commodore 64
☐ TI 99/4A
☐ IBM PC
☐ Videocassette recorder
☐ ADAM
☐ Videodisc player

8. If we ran ads for a new arcade game, would you want to try it? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Which best describes your occupation?

☐ Professional
☐ Manager/Administrative
☐ Clerical/Sales
☐ Student
☐ Other
☐ Not Employed

10. What was the last level of education you completed?

☐ Some High School
☐ Completed High School
☐ Some College
☐ Completed College
☐ Post Graduate

ABOUT COMPUTER GAMES

1. Why did you buy this magazine?

☐ The cover
☐ I buy all the VG magazines
☐ A friend told me about it
☐ I liked the last issue
☐ An article or feature (Which one? ________________)

2. Where did you buy this magazine?

☐ Newsstand/magazine store
☐ Convenience store
☐ Supermarket
☐ Other____________

3. How much time did you spend reading this magazine?
1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 3 hours ☐ more ☐

4. How many people other than yourself looked at this copy of ***Computer Games***?

In your household ______________________
Outside your household ______________________

5. What can we do to make ***Computer Games*** better?

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6. Were there any parts of ***Computer Games*** that you didn't like?

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7. Which parts of ***Computer Games*** did you like best?

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You're going to need a whole lot more than your toothbrush for this trip. You're headed deep beneath the jungles of Peru, deep into the Lost Caverns. Harry needs your help in finding his niece Rhonda and his sidekick Quickclaw. Not to mention a king's ransom in gold bars and the ever-popular Raj Diamond.

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Harry has to run, hop, swim, jump off ledges and even use rising balloons to master this new mission. He needs your help in Pitfall II: Lost Caverns,™ currently for the Atari® 2600.™ Explore David Crane's newest, from Activision!

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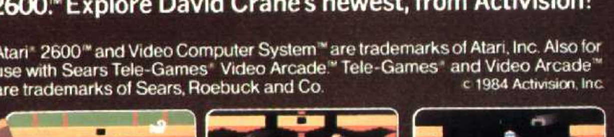

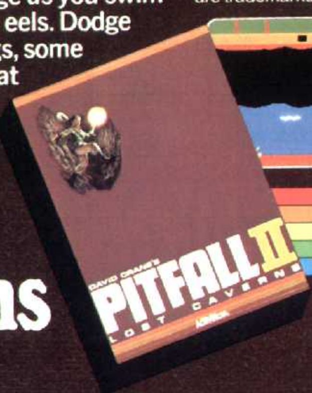
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PITFALL II
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